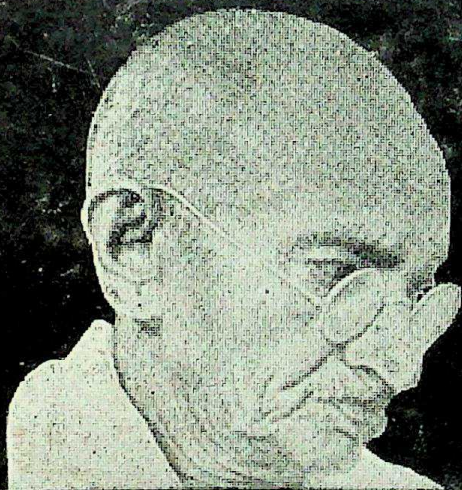


MAN v. MACHINE



"Let not the reader run away with the idea that I abuse machinery because it is machinery. What is resisted is the usurpation by machinery of the function of man and his consequent slavery to it."

M. Gandhi

CRAZE FOR MACHINERY

"WHAT I object to is the craze for machinery, not machinery as such. The craze is for what they call labour-saving machinery. Men go on 'saving labour' till thousands are without work and thrown on the open streets to die of starvation.

"I want to save time and labour not for a fraction of mankind, but for all. I want the concentration of wealth not in the hands of a few, but in the hands of all.

"To-day, machinery merely helps a few to ride on the backs of millions. The impetus behind it all is not the philanthropy to save labour, but greed.

"It is against this constitution of things that I am fighting with all my might."

—M. K. GANDHI

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Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

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MAN V. MACHINE

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

"Pocket Gandhi Series" No. 15

MAN V. MACHINE

BY

M. K. GANDHI

G.M. College of Education
Raipur, Bantalab
Jammu

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ANAND T. HINGORANI



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BHARATIYA VIDYA BHAVAN

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PREFACE

THE onward march of the machine, during the past two centuries or so, has been at such a tremendous pace and the machine has so much come to dominate our economy that the present age has been rightly called the Machine Age. From the ancient, simple and godly life, that was so characteristic of India of not long ago, we, too, now have begun moving into a modern, complicated and materialistic life where Mammon seems to hold almost complete sway. It is a thousand pities indeed that even our country, whose culture and civilization have throughout the ages remained essentially rural, should have forsaken its old heritage and, like the nations of the West, succumbed to the lure of the machine.

Gandhiji, however, refused to be lifted off his feet by the seeming triumph of machinery. He was its uncompromising opponent since the time he was in South Africa, towards the close of the last century, where he was surrounded by machines. Describing his reaction to them he confessed that their onward march had not only not impressed him, but had repelled him. It was then that he realized that "to suppress and exploit the millions, the machine was the device *par excellence*", that "it had no place in man's economy if, as social units, all men were to be equal."

It was Gandhiji's confirmed belief that the machine had not added to man's stature. He looked upon it as an evil, a great sin. It was a bane of modern civilization, but certainly no boon. He even compared it to a snake-hole "which may contain from one to a hundred snakes." But, being a practical man, he could not shut his eyes to the fact that, whether one liked it or not, the machinery had come to stay and that it could not be altogether discarded. Therefore, while accepting its inevitability in the scheme of things, he wanted to assign it

its proper place if it was to serve rather than disrupt the world. He was, however, dead against its uncontrolled and indiscriminate multiplication, and desired to regulate and restrain its use in the same way, as he said, "we regulate or ought to regulate and curb our passions." Thus, for him, only that use of machinery was lawful which subserved the interests of all, and which helped and eased human effort.

Holding these views on machinery as he did, Gandhiji naturally could not but declare himself to be "a determined foe of all machinery that is designed for exploitation", and which leads to "the enrichment of the few at the expense of the community." He, therefore, held organization of machinery "for the purposes of concentrating wealth and power in the hands of a few and for the exploitation of many" as totally wrong.

Besides, Gandhiji did not want that the machinery should usurp the functions of man, cripple his limbs and make a slave of him. He strongly objected to the craze for machinery. "The craze is for what they call," he stated, "labour-saving machinery. Men go on 'saving labour' till thousands are without work and thrown on the open streets to die of starvation." To him the individual was the supreme consideration. Machine was made for man, and not man for the machine. And so, while conceding that the machinery had its place and that it had come to stay, he, nevertheless, maintained that "it must not be allowed to displace the necessary human labour."

For the selfsame reason, Gandhiji was against industrialization of India. "It is time we realized," he said, "that where there is unlimited human power, complicated machinery on a large scale has no place.... We cannot industrialize ourselves unless we make up our minds to serve the human body."

the attempts being made to industrialize India, he asked: "How can a country with crores of living machines afford to have a machine which will displace the labour of crores of living machines? It would spell their unemployment and ruin." He regarded industrialism as a curse for mankind, much more so for a vast country like ours. "The future of industrialism is dark," he asserted, "and if the future of industrialism is dark for the West, would it not be darker still for India?"

Citing the example of America, which has reached the acme of mass-production and yet failed to banish poverty and unemployment, Gandhiji said: "There are still thousands, perhaps millions, of people in America who live in misery in spite of the phenomenal riches of the few. The whole of the American nation is not benefited by mass-production." It was, therefore, his conviction that "whatever the Machine Age may do, it will never give employment to the millions whom the wholesale introduction of power-driven machinery must displace."

Gandhiji traced the cause of India's poverty and unemployment to the extinction of her handicrafts. He, therefore, pleaded strongly for their revival which required the use of most elementary type of machinery. He welcomed the use of such machinery because, as he said, he could put it in the homes of the millions and because it did not deprive the masses of men of the opportunity to labour and did not make them merely cogs in the machine. It was his aim and endeavour to see that the individual did not lose his individuality, but became a "full-blooded, fully-developed member of society." "I am quite clear", he declared, "that whilst this Machine Age aims at converting men into machines, I am aiming at reinstating man turned machine into his

It has, however, to be confessed, with great regret though, that in spite of Gandhiji's efforts at "reinstating man turned machine into his original estate", the state of things continues to be very much the same, possibly worse. The New India that is emerging after Gandhiji's passing away has set its pace in an entirely opposite direction where machine occupies the pride of place and man has but to worship it if he is to make any headway under the new dispensation.

ANAND. T. HINGORANI

7, Edmonstone Road,
Allahabad.
August 15, 1966.

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I. MACHINERY

READER: When you speak of driving out Western civilization, I suppose you will also say that we want no machinery.

Editor: By raising this question, you have opened the wound I have received. When I read Mr. Dutt's *Economic History of India*, I wept; and, as I think of it again, my heart sickens. It is machinery that has impoverished India. It is difficult to measure the harm that Manchester has done to us. It is due to Manchester that Indian handicraft has all but disappeared. But I make a mistake. How can Manchester be blamed? We wore Manchester cloth and this is why Manchester wove it.

Machinery has begun to desolate Europe. Ruination is now knocking at the English gates. Machinery is the chief symbol of modern civilization; it represents a great sin.

The workers in the mills have become slaves. The condition of the women working in the mills is shocking. When there were no mills, these women were not starving. If the machinery craze grows in our country, it will become an unhappy land. It may be considered a heresy, but I am bound to say that it were better for us to send money to Manchester and to use flimsy Manchester cloth than to multiply mills in India. By using Manchester cloth we only waste our money; but by supporting Manchester in India, we shall keep our money at the price of our blood, because our very moral

being will be sapped, and I call in support of my statement the very mill-hands as witnesses. And those who have amassed wealth out of factories are not likely to be better than other rich men. It would be folly to assume that an Indian Rockfeller would be better than the American Rockfeller. Impoverished India can become free, but it will be hard for any India made rich through immorality to regain its freedom... Money renders a man helpless. The other thing which is equally harmful is sexual vice. Both are poison. A snake-bite is a lesser poison than these two, because the former merely destroys the body but the latter destroy body, mind and soul. We need not, therefore, be pleased with prospect of the growth of the mill-industry.

Handlooms v. Mills

Reader: Are the mills, then, to be closed down?

Editor: That is difficult. It is no easy task to do away with a thing that is established. We, therefore, say that the non-beginning of a thing is supreme wisdom. We cannot condemn mill-owners; we can but pity them. It would be too much to expect them to give up their mills, but we may implore them not to increase them. If they would be good, they would gradually contract their business. They can establish in thousands of households the ancient and sacred handlooms and they can buy out the cloth that may be thus woven. Whether the mill-owners do this or not, people can cease to use machine-made goods.

Machine-Made Things

Reader: You have so far spoken about machine-made cloth, but there are innumerable machine-made things. We have either to import them or to introduce machinery into our country.

Editor: Indeed, our gods even are made in Germany. What need, then, to speak of matches, pins and glassware? My answer can be only one. What did India do before these articles were introduced? Precisely the same should be done to-day. As long as we cannot make pins without machinery, so long will we do without them. The tinsel splendour of glassware we will have nothing to do with, and we will make wicks, as of old, with home-grown cotton and use hand-made earthen saucers for lamps. So doing, we shall save our eyes and money and support *Swadeshi* and so shall we attain Home Rule.

It is not to be conceived that all men will do all these things at one time or that some men will give up all machine-made things at once. But, if the thought is sound, we shall always find out what we can give up and gradually cease to use it. What a few may do, others will copy; and the movement will grow like the coconut of the mathematical problem. What the leaders do, the populace will gladly do in turn. The matter is neither complicated nor difficult. You and I need not wait until we can carry others with us. Those will be the losers who will not do it, and those who will not do it, although they appreciate the truth, will deserve to be called cowards.

Tram Cars and Electricity

Reader: What, then, of the tram-cars and electricity?

Editor: This question is now too late. It signifies nothing. If we are to do without the railways we shall have to do without the tram-cars. Machinery is like a snake-hole which may contain from one to a hundred snakes. Where there is machinery, there are large cities; and where there are large cities, there are tram-cars and railways; and there only does one see electric light. English villages do not boast of any of these things. Honest physicians will tell you that where means of artificial locomotion have increased, the health of the people has suffered. I remember that when in a European town there was a scarcity of money, the receipts of the tramway company, of the lawyers and of the doctors went down and people were less unhealthy. I cannot recall a single good point in connection with machinery. Books can be written to demonstrate its evils.

Poison Kills Poison

Reader: Is it a good point or a bad one that all you are saying will be printed through machinery?

Editor: This is one of those instances which demonstrate that sometimes poison is used to kill poison. This, then, will not be a good point regarding machinery. As it expires, the machinery, as it were, says to us: "Beware and avoid me. You will derive no benefits from me and the benefit that may accrue from printing will avail only those who are infected with the machinery craze."

Do not, therefore, forget the main thing. It is necessary to realize that machinery is bad. We shall then be able gradually to do away with it. Nature has not provided any way whereby we may reach a desired goal all of a sudden. If, instead of welcoming machinery as a boon, we should look upon it as an evil, it would ultimately go.

—*Indian Home Rule*: Chap. XIX (1908).

2. WHAT I AM AIMING AT

DO I want to put back the hand of the clock of progress? Do I want to replace the mills by hand-spinning and hand-weaving? Do I want to replace the railway by the country cart? Do I want to destroy machinery altogether? These questions have been asked by some journalists and public men. My answer is: I would not weep over the disappearance of machinery or consider it a calamity. But I have no design upon machinery as such. What I want to do, at the present moment, is to supplement the production of yarn and cloth through our mills, save the millions we send out of India, and distribute them in our cottages.

—*Young India*: Jan. 1, 1921.

RAILWAYS AND HOSPITALS

I am not aiming at destroying railways or hospitals, though I would certainly welcome their natural destruction. Neither railways nor hospitals are a test of a high and pure civilization. At best, they are a neces-

sary evil. Neither adds one inch to the moral stature of a nation. Nor am I aiming at a permanent destruction of law courts, much as I regard it as a 'consummation devoutly to be wished'. Still less am I trying to destroy all machinery and mills. It requires a higher simplicity and renunciation than the people are to-day prepared for.

—*Young India*: Jan. 26, 1921.

3. BANE OF CIVILIZATION

Q. YOU say machinery has been the bane of civilization. Then, why do you allow yourself to travel in railway trains and motor cars?

A. There are certain things which you cannot escape all at once, even whilst you are avoiding them. This earthy case in which I am locked up is the bane of my life, but I am obliged to put up with it and even indulge it as this friend knows. But does he seriously doubt that the Machine Age was responsible for the organized murders during the late War? Asphyxiating gas and such other abominations have not advanced us by an inch.

—*Young India*: Oct. 27, 1921.

4. NOTHING TO WITHDRAW

I HAVE nothing to withdraw from what I have said about machines in the *Indian Home Rule*, and a reference will show that I have included the printing press

in the machines. It must be remembered that it is not Indian Home Rule depicted in that book that I am placing before India. I am placing before the nation parliamentary, *i.e.*, Democratic *Swaraj*. I do not suggest to-day destruction of all machines, but I am making the spinning wheel the master-machine. The *Indian Home Rule* depicts an ideal State. The fact that I cannot come up to the ideal condition of things laid down therein, is to be attributed to my weakness. I believe that there is no religion greater than *Ahimsa*, and yet I cannot escape the *himsa* which is inevitably involved in the processes of eating and drinking. The ideal of *Ahimsa* is, however, ever before me; therefore, even in these processes, I do endeavour to restrain myself. I am striving every moment to reduce even these functions to a minimum.

—*Young India*: Aug. 14, 1924.

5. INDUSTRIALIZATION AND SWARAJ

IF *Swaraj* cannot be attained by the sin of killing Englishmen, it cannot be attained either by the erection of huge factories. Gold and silver may be accumulated, but they will not lead to the establishment of *Swaraj*. Ruskin has proved this to the hilt. Western civilization is a mere baby, a hundred or only fifty years old. And yet it has reduced Europe to a sorry plight. Let us pray that India is saved from the fate that has overtaken Europe, where the nations are poised for an attack on one another, and are silent only because of the stock-piling of armaments. Some day there will be an explo-

sion, and then Europe will be a veritable hell on earth. Non-white races are looked upon as legitimate prey by every European State. What else can we expect where covetousness is the ruling passion in the breasts of men? Europeans pounce upon new territories like crows upon a piece of meat. I am inclined to think that this is due to their mass-production factories.

A Golden Land

India must indeed have *Swaraj*, but she must have it by righteous methods. Our *Swaraj* must be real *Swaraj*, which cannot be attained by either violence or industrialization. India was once a golden land, because Indians then had a heart of gold. The land is still the same, but is a desert because we are corrupt. It can become a land of gold again, only if the base metal of our present national character is transmuted into gold. The Philosopher's Stone which can effect this transformation is a little word of two syllables *Satya* (Truth). If every Indian sticks to Truth, *Swaraj* will come to us of its own accord.

—*Unto This Last*—A Paraphrase: P. 62.

6. MAN AND MACHINE

"**A**RE you against all machinery, Bapuji?"

"How can I be," Gandhiji answered, "when I know that even this body is a most delicate piece of machinery?"

The spinning wheel itself is a machine;* a little tooth-pick is a machine. What I object to is the craze for machinery, not machinery as such. The craze is for what they call labour-saving machinery. Men go on 'saving labour' till thousands are without work and thrown on the open streets to die of starvation. I want to save time and labour, not for a fraction of mankind, but for all. I want the concentration of wealth, not in the hands of a few but in the hands of all. To-day machinery merely helps a few to ride on the backs of millions. The impetus behind it all is not the philanthropy to save labour, but greed. It is against this constitution of things that I am fighting with all my might."

Man—The Supreme Consideration

"Then Bapuji", said Ramchandran, "you are fighting not against machinery as such, but against its abuses which are so much in evidence to-day."

"I would unhesitatingly say 'yes'; but I would add that scientific truths and discoveries should first of all cease to be mere instruments of greed. Then labourers will not be overworked and machinery, instead of becoming a hindrance, will be a help. I am aiming not at eradication of all machinery but limitation."

* "I am not against machinery as such. The *Charkha* itself, for that matter, is machinery. But I am a determined foe of all machinery that is designed for exploitation of people."

Ramchandran said: "When logically argued out, that would seem to imply that all complicated power-driven machinery should go."

"It might have to go," admitted Gandhiji, "but I must make one thing clear. The supreme consideration is man. The machine should not tend to make atrophied the limbs of man. For instance, I would make intelligent exceptions. Take the case of the Singer Sewing Machine. It is one of the few useful things ever invented and there is a romance about the device itself. Singer saw his wife labouring over the tedious process of sewing and seaming with her own hands, and simply out of love for her he devised the sewing machine, in order to save her from unnecessary labour. He, however, saved not only her labour but also the labour of everyone who could purchase a sewing machine."

Replace Greed by Love

"But in that case", said Ramchandran, "there would have to be a factory for making these Singer Sewing Machines, and it would have to contain power-driven machinery of ordinary type."

"Yes," said Gandhiji, smiling at Ramchandran's eager opposition. "But I am Socialist enough to say that such factories should be nationalized, or State-controlled. They ought only to be working under the most attractive and ideal conditions, not for profit, but for the benefit of humanity, love taking the place of greed as motive. It is an alteration in the conditions of labour that I want.

This mad rush for wealth must cease, and the labourer must be assured, not only of a living wage, but a daily task that is not a mere drudgery. The machine will, under these conditions, be as much a help to man working it as to the State, or the man who owns it. The present mad rush will cease and the labourer will work (as I have said) under attractive and ideal conditions. This is but one of the exceptions I have in mind. The sewing machine had love at its back. The individual is the one supreme consideration. The saving of labour of the individual should be the object, and honest humanitarian considerations, and not greed, the motive. Thus, for instance, I would welcome any day a machine to straighten crooked spindles. Not that blacksmiths will cease to make spindles; they will continue to provide the spindles, but when the spindle gets wrong every spinner will have a machine of his own to get it straight. Therefore, replace greed by love and everything will come right."

—*Young India*: Nov. 13, 1924.

Exceptions

"If you make an exception of the Singer Sewing Machine and your spindle," Ramchandran said, "where would these exceptions end?"

Gandhiji replied: "Just where they cease to help the individual and encroach upon his individually. The machine should not be allowed to cripple the limbs of man."

“But I was not thinking just now of the practical side Bapuji,” said Ramchandran. “Ideally, would you not rule out all machinery? When you except the sewing machine, you will have to make exceptions of the bicycle, the motor car etc.?”

“No, I don’t,” said Bapu, “because they do not satisfy any of the primary wants of man, for it is not the primary need of man to traverse distances with the rapidity of a motor car. The needle, on the contrary, happens to be an essential thing in life—a primary need. Ideally, however, I would rule out all machinery, even as I would reject this very body, which is not helpful to salvation, and seek the absolute liberation of the soul. From that point of view, I would reject all machinery, but machines will remain because, like the body, they are inevitable. The body itself is the purest piece of mechanism; but if it is a hindrance to the highest flights of the soul, it has to be rejected.”

—*Young India*: Nov. 20, 1924.

7. WHY I OPPOSE MACHINERY

Q. DO you oppose all machinery on principle?

A. How could that be possible? I know that my own body is nothing but an extraordinary delicately constructed machine. The spinning wheel is also a machine, and so is every tooth-pick even. I am not fighting machinery as such, but the madness of thinking that machinery saves labour. Men ‘save labour’ until thousands of them are without work and die of hunger on

the streets. I want to secure employment and livelihood not only to part of the human race, but for all. I will not have the enrichment of a few at the expense of the community. At present, the machine is helping a small minority to live on the exploitation of the masses. The motive force of this minority is not humanity and love of their kind, but greed and avarice. This state of things I am attacking with all my might.

—*Lead Kindly Light*: P. 65.

8. MY VIEWS ON MACHINERY

I WISH, you would dismiss from your minds the views attributed to me about machinery. In the first instance, I am no more trying to present for national acceptance all my views on machinery, than I am presenting the whole of my belief in non-violence. The spinning wheel is itself an exquisite piece of machinery. My head daily bows in reverence to its unknown inventor. What I do resent is the wanton and wicked destruction of the one cottage industry of India that kept the wolf from the doors of thousands of homes scattered over a surface 1,900 miles long and 1,500 miles broad.

—*Young India*: Dec. 26, 1924.

9. LIFELESS MACHINES

AN American writer says that the future lies with nations that believe in manual labour. Nations are tired of the worship of lifeless machines multiplied *ad infinitum*. We are destroying the matchless living ma-

chines, viz., our own bodies by leaving them to rust and trying to substitute lifeless machinery for them. It is a law of God that the body must be fully worked and utilized. We dare not ignore it. The spinning wheel is the auspicious symbol of *Sharir Yajna*—body labour. He who eats his food without offering this sacrifice steals it. By giving up this sacrifice, we became traitors to the country and banged the door in the face of the Goddess of Fortune.

—*Young India*: Jan. 8, 1925.

10. CART AND CHARKHA

ONE of the friends asked me whether I propose to replace the railways with country carts, and if I did not, how I expected to replace mills with wheels. I told him that I did not propose to replace railways with carts because I could not do so even if I wished. Three hundred million carts could not destroy distance. But I could replace mills with wheels. For, railways solved the question of speed. With mills it was question of production in which the wheel could easily compete, if there were enough hands to work as there were in India. I told him that, as a matter of fact, a villager could manufacture for himself sufficient cloth cheaper than mills if he did not count the value of his labour. And he did not need to do so as he would spin or even weave during his spare hours. It is remarkable how false or incomplete analogies deceive people. In the case in point, the difference between mills and railways on the one hand and the wheels and country carts on

the other, is so obvious that the comparison should never have been made. But probably the friend thought I was against all machinery in every conceivable form. Probably he had in mind my objections to railways stated in my *Indian Home Rule*, though I have repeatedly said that I am not working out the different fundamental problems raised in that booklet.

—*Young India*: May 28, 1925.

11. SNARES OF SATAN

THE following extract from a letter of a passionate lover of *Khaddar* will be read with interest:

"There is Bertrand Russel who says that industrialism is like a force of Nature and India, too, will be submerged whether we want it or no. Only, such people say we should find our own solution for industrialism. There is truth in what they say. Industrialism is flooding all the world and after the flood they are finding their own solutions. Take Europe. I do not believe that Europe will perish. I have too much faith in human nature and human nature will find the remedy sooner or later. Can India, even if she wants to, isolate herself and get out of the clutches of industrialism?"

The argument to which this lover of *Khaddar* has been involuntarily and irresistibly drawn is Satan's old device. He always goes with us half-way, and then suddenly insinuates that it is no good going further and points to the seeming impossibility of further progress. He applauds virtue, but immediately says that it is not given to man to attain it.

Now, the difficulty that has occurred to the friend is a difficulty that faces a reformer at every step. Have not untruth and hypocrisy permeated society? Yet those

who believe in the ultimate triumph of truth, persist in it in the absolute hope of success. A reformer never permits time to run against him, for he defies that ancient enemy. Of course, industrialism is like a force of Nature, but it is given to man to control Nature and to conquer her forces. His dignity demands from him resolution in the face of overwhelming odds. Our daily life is such a conquest. An agriculturist knows it only too well.

What is Industrialism?

What is industrialism but a control of the majority by a small minority? There is nothing attractive about it, nor is there anything inevitable in it. If the majority simply wills to say 'no' to the blandishments of the minority, the latter is powerless for mischief.

It is good to have faith in human nature. I live because I have that faith. But that faith does not blind me to the fact of history that, whilst in the ultimate all is well, individuals and groups called nations have before now perished. Rome, Greece, Babylon, Egypt and many others are a standing testimony in proof of the fact that nations have perished before now because of their misdeeds. What may be hoped for is that Europe, on account of her fine and scientific intellect, will realize the obvious and retrace her steps, and from the demoralizing industrialism she will find a way out. It will not necessarily be a return to the old absolute simplicity. But it will have to be a reorganization in which village life will predominate, and in which brute and material force will be subordinated to the spiritual force.

SNARES OF SATAN

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

False Analogies

Lastly, we must not be entrapped by false analogies. European writers are handicapped for want of experience and accurate information. They cannot guide us beyond a certain measure if they have to generalize from European examples which cannot be on all fours with Indian conditions, because in Europe they have nothing like the conditions of India, not even excluding Russia. What may be, therefore, true of Europe is not necessarily true of India. We know, too, that each nation has its own characteristics and individuality. India has her own; and if we are to find out a true solution for her many ills, we shall have to take all the idiosyncrasies of her constitution into account, and then prescribe a remedy. I claim that to industrialize India in the same sense as Europe is to attempt the impossible.

My Faith in India

India has stood many a storm. Each has left its own indelible mark it is true, but she has hitherto dauntlessly maintained her individuality. India is one of the few nations of the earth which have witnessed the fall of many civilizations, herself remaining scatheless. India is one of the few nations on the earth which have retained some of their ancient institutions, although they have been overlaid with superstition and error. But she has hitherto shown an inherent capacity for purging herself of error and superstition. My faith in her ability to solve the economic problem that faces her millions has never been so bright as it is to-day.

—*Young India*: Aug. 6, 1925.

12. ADVICE FROM JAPAN

SOMETIME during last month, two Japanese friends came to me, engaged me in a pleasant conversation and left with me the following document:

"The great spirits of India once came to Japan through China.

"They made great influences upon the whole of the souls of Japanese. The influences still have upon us Japanese and will have for ever, so Japanese pay great special respects to India.

"Now I am here in India—so much respected country by our people—I feel quite happy.

"Even in the present time, at our own age, there came out a greatest man who is wholly self-sacrificed and absolutely honest to the justice and truth.

"It should be great happiness to me if I should be allowed to be present before him and should be permitted to be given some influences from him directly.

"We know him only through books and newspapers. There may be some misunderstandings on us to know about him.

"Let me have honour to be given some of his opinions upon our thoughts.

"Men are borned naked. But to them two hands are given.

"We think God have given paradise upon men, but He have not given it directly upon men, He have given it indirectly upon them by giving two hands,—the power to create any and every-thing—to make paradise itself in the present world, so I think it is the duty of men to make use their hands best. For instance, they must make clothes with many variety and baauty to fit to several climates and different occasions. And in some occasions they must be clothed more beautiful than wild beasts and fowls, more beautiful than the skin of tigers or peacocks. Because to be beautiful is one essential thing in paradise with to be good and to be truth.

"To make railroads, steamers and many different machines is our duty and we must utilize them with utmost efficiency, so yarn system, make pardon to say, I think is not the final end of our purposes to attain, only one of means to teach people to be thrift, frugality, sound minded and such as to give other many good influences upon them, and make utilize plenty of time in country lifes where many hands are left idle."

I have purposely refrained from making any corrections, for its quaintness would then be gone. I wish I had read this document before seeing these friends, in which case I would have told them that it was my realization of the fact that God has given us two hands that made me think of asking millions of the inhabitants of this land not to allow them to remain idle for a single minute, but to make the best use possible of them so as to be able by their use during leisure hours to clothe the whole of India. I would also have asked my friends to help us to realize our destiny by inducing Japan not to inflict her cloth upon us, but to engage only in such commerce with us as would be mutually beneficial. Finally, I would have told them that I had no quarrel with railroads, steamers and many different machines as such, but that I protested against the abuse that was at present being made of them, either for exploiting many nations of the earth or for destroying them.

—*Young India*: Aug. 13, 1925.

13. MACHINERY AND EXPLOITATION

Q. IS your condemnation of railroads, doctors, hospitals and other features of modern civilization essential and unalterable? Should we not, first, try to develop a spirit great enough to spiritualize the machinery and the organized, scientific and productive powers of modern life? (Questioner is an American).

A. My condemnation of railroads, etc., whilst true where it stands, has little or no bearing on the present

movement which disregards none of the institutions mentioned by the writer. In the present movement I am neither attacking railroads nor hospitals, but in an ideal state they seem to me to have little or no place. The present movement is just the attempt the writer desires. Yet it is not an attempt to spiritualize the machinery—because that seems to me an impossible task—but to introduce, if it is at all possible, a human or the humane spirit among the men behind the machinery.

Organization of Machinery

Organization of machinery for the purpose of concentrating wealth and power in the hands of a few and for the exploitation of many, I hold to be altogether wrong. Much of the organization of machinery of the present age is of that type. The movement of the spinning wheel is an organized attempt to displace machinery from that state of exclusiveness and exploitation and to place it in its proper state. Under my scheme, therefore, men in charge of machinery will think not of themselves or even of the nation to which they belong; but of the whole human race. Thus, Lancashire men will cease to use their machinery for exploiting India and other countries, but, on the contrary, they will devise means of enabling India to convert in her own villages her cotton into cloth. Nor will Americans, under my scheme, seek to enrich themselves by exploiting the other races of the earth through their inventive skill.

—*Young India*: Sept. 17, 1925.

14. THE PLACE OF MACHINERY

MACHINERY has its place; it has come to stay. But it must not be allowed to displace the necessary human labour. An improved plough is good thing. But if by some chance one man could plough up by some mechanical invention of his the whole of the land of India and control all the agricultural produce and if the millions had no other occupation, they would starve, and being idle, they would become dunces, as many have already become. There is hourly danger of many more being reduced to that unenviable state. I would welcome every improvement in the cottage machine, but I know that it is criminal to displace the hand labour by the introduction of power-driven spindles unless one is at the same time ready to give millions of farmers some other occupation in their homes.

—*Young India*: Nov. 5, 1925.

15. TO WHAT END?

MRS. KELLY: Is it true that you object to railways, steamships and other means of speedy locomotion?

Gandhiji: It is and it is not. You should really get the book in which I have expounded my views in this connection—*Indian Home Rule*. It is true in the sense that under ideal conditions we should not need these things. It is not true in the sense that in these days it is not easy to sever ourselves from those things. But is the world any the better for those quick instruments of locomotion? How do these instru-

ments advance man's spiritual progress? Do they not, in the last resort, hamper it? And, is there any limit to man's ambition? Once we were satisfied with travelling a few miles an hour, to-day we want to negotiate hundreds of miles in an hour, one day we might desire to fly through space. What will be the result? Chaos—we would be tumbling upon one another, we would be simply smothered.

Mrs. Kelly: But do masses desire these things?

Gandhiji: They do. I have seen mobs getting almost mad on Sundays and holidays. In London, a long unbreakable train of motor cars at every corner is quite a usual phenomenon. And what is all this worry and fitful hurry for? To what end? I tell you, if by some sudden catastrophe all these instruments were to be destroyed, I would not shed a single tear. I would say, it is a proper storm and a proper cleansing.

Under Ideal Conditions

Mrs. Kelly: But supposing you need to go to Calcutta, how would you go unless by train?

Gandhiji: Certainly, by train. But why should I need to go to Calcutta? Under ideal conditions, as I have said, I need not traverse those long distances, not at any rate in the shortest possible time. I shall explain myself. Today, two good people come from America with a kind and loving message. But along with the two come two hundred with all sorts of motives. For aught we know, a large number may be coming just in search

of further avenues of exploitation. Is that the benefit of quick locomotion to India?

Mrs. Kelly: I see. But how can we get back to the ideal condition of things?

Gandhiji: Not easily. It is an express moving at a terrific speed that we are in. We cannot all of a sudden jump out of it. We cannot go back to the ideal state all at a jump. We can look forward to reaching it some day.

—*Young India*: Jan. 21, 1926.

16. 'THE MORALS OF MACHINERY'

'*THE CURRENT THOUGHT*' for February has reproduced Mr. Richard B. Gregg's letter to a friend on the 'Morals of Machinery'. Mr. Gregg is an ex-American lawyer with a wide experience of his own country. He has lived in the midst of the very things he describes in his letter and has at one time in his life contributed to their growth. He, therefore, writes with authority.

"Most people" he says, "accept mechanism for its immediate results and are quite blind to the secondary results of slower growth. But these latter are the most important". He then recounts in detail the evils of multiplication of machinery. He puts enormous concentration of material power and wealth in the hands of the few first in the list. "Machinery and modern industry", Mr. Gregg truly says, "have taken the money of millions of people and concentrated its management and

control into relatively few hands, and modern developments of banking and credit have concentrated the control of all the materials and factories and mills into still fewer hands." Do we not see this process going on even in our own country at the cost of the millions who are being bled white in order to support huge industries thousands of miles away from their cottage? "Probably", says Mr. Gregg, "the real ultimate control of industry in Europe, America and most of Asia and Africa is concentrated in the hands of not over 1,500 men, perhaps fewer still."

Evils of Industrialism

"Such tremendous power is a temptation which human nature cannot withstand. It involves tyranny, vanity, pride, greed, selfishness, ruthless competition on the one side, loss of liberty, insecurity, fears, loss of self-reliance and of independence, degradation, poverty, loss of dignity and self-respect on the other".

"Deaths, maiming and crippling by industrial accidents far exceed corresponding injuries by war. Diseases and physical deterioration caused, directly and indirectly, by modern industry are appalling. For, it is industry that has caused the development of large cities with their smoke, dirt, noise, bad air, lack of sunshine and outdoor life, slums, disease, prostitution, and unnatural living."

The waste in advertisements is truly 'appalling'. "The President of the British Incorporated Society of Adver-

'THE MORALS OF MACHINERY'

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

tisement Consultants recently estimated that the annual expenditure on advertisements for the British Isles alone is £ 175,000,000."

'Parasitism'

Another striking feature is 'parasitism'. "Man is made to obey the machine. The wealthy and middle classes become helpless and parasitic upon the working classes. And the latter become so specialized that they also become helpless. The ordinary city-dweller cannot make his own clothing or produce or prepare his own food. The cities become parasitic upon the country. Industrial nations upon agricultural nations. Those who live in temperate climates are increasingly parasitic upon tropical peoples. Governments upon the peoples they govern. Armies upon civilians. People even become parasitic and passive in regard to their recreation and amusements. They want to be amused, instead of amusing themselves. They throng the cinemas and theatres and music halls. They watch others play crickets, etc."

Irresponsibility

"Along with this parasitism has come a widespread irresponsibility. The industrial 'magnate' or banker issues an order in Europe which affects vitally the lives of Negroes in Central Africa."

The consumers, too, fare no better. They, too, cease to feel the responsibility. "When I", exclaims Mr. Gregg, "seated in a restaurant in France, put some pepper in

my soup, do I stop to think what poor coolie in Java, perchance, endured the hardship of gathering it while subject to a fever, and perhaps to the indignities and brutality of harsh plantation supervision?"

I must, however, resist the temptation to quote more from this instructive letter. I must ask the reader to see the original if the samples I have put before him have whetted his appetite for more. The reader must not think that Mr. Gregg is against all machinery. He is against its uncontrolled multiplication. He would regulate and restrain its use, as we regulate or ought to regulate and curb our passions. That use of machinery is lawful which subserves the interests of all.

—*Young India*: April 15, 1926.

17. A QUESTION

Q. ARE you against all machinery?

A. My answer is emphatically, No. But I am against its indiscriminate multiplication. I refuse to be dazzled by the seeming triumph of machinery. I am uncompromisingly against all destructive machinery. But simple tools and instruments and such machinery as saves individual labour and lightens the burden of the millions of cottagers, I should welcome.

—*Young India*: June 17, 1926.

18. THE SAME OLD ARGUMENT

AFTER reciting the evils from which we are suffering and after dealing with the improvements he would make in agriculture, a correspondent writes:

"I think all these cannot be effected if we can stand back and say civilization is a disease. We have to face the disease boldly, and find out a remedy for eradicating the evils accruing therefrom. We have come to a stage of development when we cannot get out of this modern or satanic civilization. In this century of easy communication, no country can live in isolation from another. Western influences are shaking the very fundamentals of our society in economic, social, religious and political matters. In this struggle I think all the silly, superstitious and secondary elements have to meet their destruction making way for the solid and essential things to remain... We cannot any longer be content with our bullock-carts or old earthen lamps. We cannot escape the steamships, railways, motor cars, printing Presses, the ideas of democracy, of love and world brotherhood. Nobody thought that Japan would become such a powerful nation in the East. If she had shirked to take up modern method of production, she would have been exactly where, for instance, China is at present, asking for sympathy of other nations. Our aim must be to see to the healthy growth of India. This cannot be done by magic. We must have a larger income. The national income is pitifully low. English economists complain that a decent cultured life is not possible with a less than *per capita* income of £50; then what about India? Unless we start industries able to withstand foreign competition, is it possible to increase the national dividend? We must have a favourable balance of trade for India, and then and then only can the Indian peasant be made to think of sanitation, education, decency, etc.... India is living yet, for she has hitherto adapted herself to changing conditions. This cannot be done without the introduction of machinery and large-scale production."

This is the old argument restated. The correspondent forgets that to make India like England and America is to find some other races and places of the earth for exploitation. So far it appears that the Western nations

have divided all the known races outside Europe for exploitation and that there are no new worlds to discover. Among the exploited, India is the greatest victim. Japan is taking the share of the spoils no doubt. But if India and China refuse to be exploited, what will happen to the exploiters? And if the Western nations plus Japan are likely to come to grief in the event of India and China refusing to be exploited, what can be the fate of India trying to ape the West? Indeed, the West has had a surfeit of industrialism and exploitation. If they who are suffering from the disease are unable to find a remedy to correct the evils, how shall we, mere novices, be able to avoid them?

Industrial Civilization—A Disease

The fact is that this industrial civilization is a disease because it is *all* evil. Let us not be deceived by catch-words and phrases. I have no quarrel with steamships or telegraphs. They may stay, if they can, without the support of industrialism and all it connotes. They are not an end. We must not suffer exploitation for the sake of steamships and telegraphs. They are in no way indispensable for the permanent welfare of the human race. Now that we know the use of steam and electricity, we should be able to use them on due occasion and after we have learnt to avoid industrialism. Our concern is, therefore, to destroy industrialism at any cost.

Industrialism is No Remedy

The correspondent has suggested the remedy without knowing it himself. For, he admits that India has lived

till now when other nations have perished because she has adapted herself to changing conditions. Adaptability is not imitation. It means power of resistance and assimilation. India has withstood the onslaughts of other civilizations because she has stood firm on her own ground. Not that she has not made changes. But the changes she has made have promoted her growth. To change to industrialism is to court disaster. The present distress is undoubtedly insufferable. Pauperism must go. But industrialism is no remedy. The evil does not lie in the use of bullock-carts. It lies in our selfishness and want of consideration for our neighbours. If we have no love for our neighbours, no change however revolutionary can do us any good. And if we love our neighbours, the paupers of India, for their sakes, we shall use what they make for us; for their sakes, we who should know, shall not engage in an immoral traffic with the West in the shape of buying the foreign fineries and taking them to the villages.

If we would but think seriously and persistently, we shall discover that before we make any other changes, the one great change to make is to discard foreign cloth and reinstate the ancient cottage industry of hand-spinning. We must thus restore our ancient and health-giving industry if we would resist industrialism.

India's Destiny

India's destiny lies not along the bloody way of the West, of which she shows signs of tiredness, but along the bloodless way of peace that comes from a simple and

godly life. India is in danger of losing her soul. She cannot lose it and live. She must not, therefore, lazily and helplessly say: 'I cannot escape the onrush from the West.' She must be strong enough to resist it for her sake and that of the world.

—*Young India*: Oct. 7, 1926.

19. PROBLEM OF POVERTY

THE problem of poverty will never be solved by an indiscriminate importation of machinery and technical skill from England, or any other foreign land. As Gokhale put it years ago, this kind of importation stunts our growth. We become more and more hewers of wood and drawers of water. What we need to do is to add to our capacity for labour with our hands and feet the necessary technical skill, so that we may devise our own machinery suitable to our requirements. A slavish imitation of the West can but kill all initiative or skill and, therefore, the capacity for living with anything like decent comfort.

—*Young India*: Dec. 16, 1926.

20. MULTIPLICATION OF WANTS

I DO not believe that multiplication of wants and machinery contrived to supply them is taking the world a single step nearer its goal. I wholeheartedly detest this mad desire to destroy distance and time, to increase animal appetites and go to the ends of the earth in search

of their satisfaction. If modern civilization stands for all this, and I have understood it to do so, I call it Satanic.

—*Young India*: March 17, 1927.

21. RUINOUS EXPLOITATION

“DO you claim that *Charkha* will do away with poverty in the land?”

I do claim that if *Charkha* becomes universal, it will drive away starvation. The whole atmosphere will be revolutionized. You possibly do not know that round the sixty crores of foreign cloth is woven the whole fabric of the Empire,—the bulk of the mercantile marine, and quite a number of allied industries. You will save by excluding foreign cloth, not millions but billions. And then with spinning and weaving coming to their own, there will grow up a number of allied industries. The carpenter, the blacksmith, the washerman and others will find additional work and a lot of skilled labour. In other words, you will reconstruct the Indian village.

“But why not *Swadeshi* mill-made cloth?”

What will you do with unemployment? Industrialize the whole country and become a nation of exploiters!

“All countries living on machinery have to exploit other countries!”

It is the truth. If you want to become inordinately rich, you must draw on other countries and impoverish them. If you want an inflated head,—I know it from experience,—you must draw on all the other limbs of the body. In

fact, you will have to do more. For, exploitation will not be enough. You will have to arm yourselves to fight with other countries for trade monopolies. I want to save India from the catastrophe of ruinous exploitation.

"Is it not Nature's phenomenon, that some must be rich and others must be poor?"

It is certainly not Nature's phenomenon that the head must receive all the blood from the feet and the feet deprived of it.

—*Young India*: Aug. 25, 1927.

22. IS IT POSSIBLE?

"**I**S it possible, Mr. Gandhi, to stop the growing industrialization of India?"

Certainly it should be possible, and if it is not possible, India and with it the whole world certainly go headlong to ruin.

"Why can't you do as other countries do?"

Shall we take the case of England? What is she doing but exploiting India and Africa? And India will have to find out countries as big as herself for exploitation.

"But, take the United States. Does that nation need to exploit other nations? It would appear to be a self-contained country."

It can be self-contained, no doubt, but it is not. Look at the killing competition going on between American and English and other traders in India. You will remember that H.M. the King was alarmed to find the

large number of American typewriters at Wembly. And what is Mr. Ford doing? He is exploring avenues to dump his motor cars into India. He is getting a survey made of our roads, and would even build roads for us, so that he could create a big market.

“He would have his motor factories here?”

Yes, just as Lever Bros. had theirs in South Africa. And look at Japan, the type of an industrialized Asiatic nation. It is exploiting China, it is exploiting India, and is growing into a formidable rival of England. Exploitation brings in its train the craving for markets, and that brings wars. This craving must be destroyed, and it can be done by every cottage being able to satisfy its vital necessities, and thus making the nation self-contained.

“But all this can be done by improving the relation between capital and labour, by promoting a spirit of brotherhood and so on.”

No, that will touch only the internal conditions of the country, but not international conditions. It may remedy some of evils of industrialism, but it cannot prevent exploitation.

“The fact is, Mr. Gandhi, the material resources of the West have advanced out of proportion to its moral resources, and something need be done to bring them on a level with each other.”

That is precisely what the *Charkha* is intended to do.

“It is difficult for all to understand the inwardness of the movement, and I am glad I have had this talk. But you have a tremendous struggle before you.”

I know, I know. From the wordly point of view, the odds are all against me. But if there is hand of God in my work, as I trust is, success is bound to come. Even now there is sympathy, and desire to know things and help, but it is more or less a patronising attitude. When that attitude gives place to the sympathisers identifying themselves with the cause, success will not be long in coming.

—*Young India*: Aug. 25, 1927.

23. ECONOMICS OF GOD

I OFFER the economics of God as opposed to the economics of the Devil which is gaining ground in the world to-day. The latter aims at or results in concentrating a million rupees in one man's hands, whereas the former in distributing them among a million or thousands; and in placing the economics of the spinning wheel before you, I am really trying to establish the economics of God, and I ask for the co-operation of Hindus, Mussalmans, Parsis, Christians and all in this holy mission. The industrialism of to-day is fast destroying the village in India; it is only by converting every home into a spinning mill and every village into a weaving mill, that we can revivify the village life.

Personally, I think there is no room in true economics which is convertible with religion for the owning of slaves whether they are human beings, cattle or machinery. There is no room for slavery in economics.

24. CURSE OF MACHINERY

THE spinning wheel stands for simple life and high thinking. It is a standing rebuke against the modern mad rush for adding material comfort upon comfort and making life so complicated as to make one doubly unfit for knowing oneself and one's God. It says appealingly, every minute of our lives, to you and to me: 'Use me and if you unitedly make use of me, small and insignificant though I may appear, you will find in the end that I will become an irresistible force against the mad indiscriminate worship of the curse called machinery.

—*Young India*: Dec. 8, 1927.

25. GOD FORBID !

GOD forbid that India should ever take to industrialization after the manner of West. The economic imperialism of a single tiny island kingdom (England) is to-day keeping the world in chains. If an entire nation of 30 millions took to similar economic exploitation, it would strip the world bare like locusts. Unless the capitalists of India help to avert that tragedy by becoming trustees of the welfare of the masses, and by devoting their talents not to amassing wealth for themselves but to the service of the masses in an altruistic spirit, they will end either by destroying the masses or being destroyed by them.

—*Young India*: Dec. 20, 1928.

26. 'THE HAND OF MAN'

THE author of the following article, which he heads 'The Hand of Man', writes:

"Accompanying this letter, I am sending you an article which I hope you will find acceptable for *Young India*.

"*Young India* is an inspiration to me, for I am keenly sympathetic toward your ideals and deeply grateful for the service you are rendering all humanity. I have hoped to show in the article I am sending, that your ideal is a human one as opposed to the inhuman mechanistic ideal which is sweeping over the world to-day.

"If, as an editor, you wish to know who the contributor to your paper is, I would say that I am an American artist-painter, for many years interested in the study of the Hindu religions. In Treubner's Oriental Series, I have published the *Life of Gautama Buddha* compiled from Pali texts."

I do not desire to add by way of preface anything more to the letter beyond expressing the hope that the reader will take to heart the testimony against machinery worship of one who is of the West and who has, therefore, tasted both the sweets and the bitters of the Machinery Age. Let him not run away with the idea that either the writer or I abuse all machinery because it is machinery. What is resisted is the usurpation by machinery of the function of man and his consequent slavery to it.

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The Hand of Man

I went from the streets of a great Western City, full of towering houses, terrific and deafening noises, into the quiet halls of an ethnographical museum. Almost before I could grasp what had happened, I felt the eternal quiet of Buddha statues around me.

Yet still I went forward, pushed by the wave of restlessness, and came into the rooms where were many objects from the East, representing the arts and crafts of Asia and the Pacific. There the stillness of Buddha changed to a new vibration of life, so that I could almost smell sandalwood and *champak* flower. Life itself came from the things in the room which Eastern hands had held so close and fashioned so carefully and tenderly. Life had been put into fabrics and carvings of wood, and life emanated subtly out of them, again like a perfume, a soft glow, warm and strangely thrilling after the iron streets of the Western city.

I saw with especial pleasure a long, slender canoe; it was obviously the intimate expression of some man and not the impersonal product of machinery. On the canoe were painted pure designs in red and black, beautiful patterns far removed from literalism, yet so true in spirit that one immediately had the joy of discovering and interpreting them as flying fish. Beside the canoe lay larger, but very shapely, boats such as I have seen on the river near Calcutta: these contained dark mysterious recesses for protection from a blazing sun.

Temples of Ceylon

India, Ceylon and Burma had contributed their life to this museum. I saw not only the things present, for Eastern memories were revived, and I saw again the glistening white Buddhist temples of Ceylon—not the ancient temples of the guide books—but those of to-day, so pure and clean, hidden in some forest retreat, genuine

expressions of the devotion of those who built and tended them. After the huge proportions of Western buildings, I had been surprised by the smaller Eastern ones. Now I believe that these smaller buildings have a kind of power the larger ones have not. Mere size will soon cease to impress us, but because man can build the smaller building with less intermediary of machine, it becomes more human and, therefore, more divine and mysterious than the cold vast edifices of steel and iron and machine.

Village of Hamirpur

I remembered the village of Hamirpur in India, the plastic form of whose houses had greatly pleased me, and similar houses in the humbler quarters of Benares, sometimes with bright fresco paintings relieving their whiteness, the carved facades and courts of mountain village in the Himalayas, the sheer creative beauty of blue horses made for a procession held in a small village at the time of the *Ramalila*. These things had appealed to me in India as much as her greater palaces and temples. But it came upon me suddenly that the forms in which the East has expressed itself are living forms, vital from the hand of man. Once this was true of all the world but it is no longer so. To-day, in the West at least, only the rich can have such things about them. They seek for rugs, pottery, paintings, furniture and fabrics not made by machine. It is the natural desire of man to work with his hands, to take pleasure in such work, and to have the objects about him imbued with the vital

expression which only the human hand can give to them. May not Western restlessness, quick wearying and feverish change in fashions be partly due to the fact that machine-made objects are dead and give nothing out?*

I have these following notes from a great artist:

“Life is put into an object and the object lives,—all we possess is life—life must flow—making things is the passion of life, weaving, carving, building—this is the flow of life, life flows into the object—and life flows out again to the beholder—so that whoever makes a little fountain, anything with real interest, puts life into it and makes of life for the next comer. Therefore, a Gandhi weaver is transmuting life to others—and that is the great charity.”

Mechanistic Age

We have entered the terrible Mechanistic Age, foreseen by Samuel Butler when man slaves for a machine. Philosophers like Bergson and Betrand Russell warn us of the dangers of mechanism; but who can withstand his age? The American culture is more and more insidiously dominated by the machine. In Europe, we hear that the new Russia worships the machine declaring human sentiments to be inferior to it!

No country throughout its long history has stood so definitely in opposition to the mechanistic ideal as India has done. From her most ancient days she has declared man to be divine, all life and vitality to be a part of the One Life. Within man himself lies the power

*“After all, true art can only be expressed not through inanimate power-driven machinery designed for mass production but only through the delicate living touch of the hands of men and women.”

—*Young India*: March 14, 1929.

to conquer time and space, and only there can true conquest be made. Rightly, India has worshipped vitality and known that only through it could the Supreme be reached, as in the relation between *Shakti* and *Shiva*. Her ancient psychologists knew as well as any to-day that all the senses are but the modification of the sense of touch, that even in thought we only know relations. Therefore, we may well expect her to appreciate the significance of tactile values.

Truth, Goodness and Beauty

Objects made by the hand cannot help expressing the vital living being which makes them. He transfers his character to the objects. Art is nothing else but this expression—that is its importance and its reality. All life in the phenomenal state must express itself. The expressions of men most highly self-realized are the most important expressions in the world; theirs really is the highest art. We wish to be influenced by such characters, by the work bearing their stamp. The dictum of Plato remains eternally that Truth, Goodness and Beauty are one. There is no difference between the highest asceticism and the highest aestheticism.

Machine—A Symbol of Death

The machine is a dead hand, its work expresses death: when we live surrounded by its work we live in a dead world; in accepting it instead of the real work of the hand, we deny for ourselves living influences. By not doing things with our hand, by relegating such work to

the machine, we lose our power of expression, by dis-use we grow more and more imbecile. For, man is a 'hand-brained animal' as is often said. Already the automobile is producing a fat and lazy type.

Hope Lies in India

There must come the reaction against so much machinery, when man will ask himself what profiteth it if he gains the whole world but loseth his manhood. Then, he will neither become a slave to the machine, nor allow others to slave for him. In India, where the climate itself makes the thought of great factories seem even more hellish than elsewhere, where also a simple form of life is possible, and where religious ideals are opposed to such a falsification of man, we may look for a proper and successful resistance to the mechanical monster.

—*Young India*: March 21, 1929.

27. Urban v. Rural

SEVERAL correspondents have sent me cuttings from *Prabuddha Bharat* containing an elaborate criticism of Gregg's book* and there-ament the whole cult of the *Charkha*. The articles are too long for reproduction in these pages. I must refer the curious to the original. But they enunciate the following propositions:

1. "India must become industrial in the Western sense;
2. "The question of physical existence cannot be solved by the *Charkha*;
3. "The conditions attached to the success of the *Charkha* make too large claims on prevailing tendencies and human nature;

* *Economics of Khaddar*.

4. "The justification and superiority of machines lie not so much in meeting the internal needs of a country as in invading and capturing foreign markets;
5. "If India is to live and fulfil her spiritual mission among men, she *must* modernize herself....Let us unhesitatingly and energetically assimilate the modern industrial methods....But along with that we must practise spirituality intensely, create a mighty spiritual idealism in the mind of the nation, and a great love for the country so that on the wings of them we may cross ovr the dark valley of modernism in which the West is sadly groping. *Without spiritual idealism, modernism will spell a speedy ruin.*"

I have, so far as possible, copied the writer's words including his italics.

Why Copy Western Model ?

I am sorry that I am unable to suscribe to these propositions. They are obviously based upon the assumption that modern civilization is comparatively a good thing and that it cannat be resisted with any hope of success. There is a growing body of enlightened opinion in the West which distrusts this civilization which has insatiable material ambition at one end and consequent war at the other.

But whether good or bad, why must India become industrial in the Western sense? The Western civilization is urban. Small countries like England or Italy may afford to urbanize their systems. A big country like America with a very sparse population, perhaps, cannot do otherwise. But one would think that a big country with a teeming population, with an ancient rural tradition which has hitherto answered its purpose, need not,

must not copy the Western model. What is good for one nation situated in one condition is not necessarily good enough for another, differently situated. One man's food is often another man's poison. Physical geography of a country has a predominant share in determining its culture. A fur coat may be necessity for the dweller in the polar regions, it will smother those living in the equatorial regions.

An Impossible Attempt

The author's second proposition that 'the question of physical existence cannot be solved by the *Charkha* cannot hold water. On the contrary, that question can only be answered by the *Charkha* or its equivalent. Every writer of note, whether Indian or European, has admitted the necessity of cottage industries, if India is to live physically. The writer of the article in question has done less than justice to himself, to Mr. Gregg and to his own country by summarily dismissing Mr. Gregg's dispassionate thesis. Mr. Gregg has considerable engineering experience and he has shown conclusively that it will be suicidal, it must mean certain death to millions of India's population, if the solar power stored in the hands and feet of her three hundred million inhabitants is allowed to run to waste in the impossible attempt to replace it with steam or such other power *for the purpose of sustaining physical existence*. It would be on a par with the attempt made by a man not to use his hand for bringing food to the lips, but to let a machine do the

work of the hand and run the risk in the bargain of sometimes burning his lips for want of the automatic protection that the sensory nerves connecting the hand with the brain afford against overhot dishes.

Steady Progress

The third proposition is now simply answered. 'The conditions attached to the *Charkha*' not only make no 'large claims on the prevailing tendencies and human nature,' but they are based on 'the prevailing tendencies and human nature' as they are to be found in India. Were it otherwise, in the midst of confusion and disappointment running through so many national activities, the *Charkha* would not have spread through 2,000 villages nor would it have shown the steady, though necessarily slow, progress it has demonstrably made during the past eight years' revival.

Worship of the Machine

In the fourth proposition, the writer justifies the worship of the Machine Age not for the reason that it may meet the 'internal needs of a country', but because it means an 'invasion and capturing of foreign markets.' Unfortunately or fortunately for India, there are no foreign markets to invade and capture. The consummate exploiters of the West have 'done the trick.' We may invade and capture foreign markets, if we will at the same time invade and capture the foreign manufacturing countries. And if the writer has any such grand scheme in contemplation, he thinks it is more difficult

of accomplishment than the task set before themselves by the votaries of the *Charkha*.

Exploitation Means Usurpation

The last proposition gives away the writer's whole case. He will modernize India and yet retain her spirituality without which he thinks, in italics, that '*modernism will spell ruin.*' He will have India to do what experienced sages have told us is impossible of accomplishment. 'Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.' He seems to agree that the West has failed to reconcile the two. Why does he think that India can perform the impossible task? Why should it not be assumed that if the ancients could have done it, they would have done so long ago? Indeed, it was after making the attempt that the authors of the *Upanishads* said: 'All this is God's. Therefore, live so as not to covet your neighbour's property.*' Surely, exploitation means usurpation. And usurpation can never be reconciled with spiritualism. It pained me, therefore, to read the article with such a dismal conclusion in a magazine which is solely devoted to spiritual culture.

Double-Edged Theory

What was more painful still was the exploitation of the name of Swami Vivekanand in connection with the double-edged theory propounded by the writer. The inferential invocation of the authority of the illustrious

* ईशावास्यमिदं सर्वं यत्किञ्च जगत्यां जगत् ।

तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथा मा गृधः कस्यस्विद्धनम् ॥

dead in a reasoned discussion should be regarded as a sacrilege. After all, we, a handful of educated Indians, are shouldering a serious responsibility in gambling with the fortunes of the dumb millions whose trustees we claim to be. A still more serious responsibility rests upon the shoulders of those of us who claim to possess some spiritual perception.

—*Young India*: July 25, 1929.

28. MECHANIZATION OF INDUSTRY

MY conviction is that as soon as the existing exploitation of the so-called weaker nations of the earth by the strong nations of the West ceases, as it is bound some day to cease, the whole world will have to return to the spinning wheel. Whether, however, that event comes to pass or not, unless India becomes an exploiting nation and discovers new nations to exploit, or unless an independent India develops brute strength enough to compel the nations of the West to buy the goods that she may dump down on their soil as India is virtually compelled to-day to receive goods dumped down on her soil, India must, if she is to rid herself of her economic distress, manufacture the articles of necessity in her own cottages just as she produces her corn, the prime necessity of life, in her own fields.

No Contradiction

There is, therefore, no contradiction in trying to secure a wheel or a machine which would enable the cottagers in their own cottages to spin more or finer yarn in the

same given time as the existing spinning wheel does. This progressive method of improving home machines has been handed down from ancient times. The *Takli* or the distaff was displaced by the spinning wheel. The spinning wheel itself underwent gradual improvement as one sees even to-day from the different old patterns working in different provinces. The process of improvement was suddenly arrested when the spinning wheel went out of fashion.

Urbanization of India

The fact is that I have no objection to machines as such, but I do submit that it is wrong to carry the process of mechanization of industry so far as to kill the cottage industries and concentrate them within a narrow field; in other words, I am against urbanization of India at the expense of her rural civilization and rural life.

—*Young India*: Nov. 21, 1929.

29. THE MACHINERY METHOD

I HOLD that the machinery method is harmful when the same thing can be done easily by millions of hands not otherwise occupied. It is any day better and safer for the millions spread in the seven hundred thousand villages of India, scattered over an area nineteen hundred miles long and fifteen hundred broad, that they manufacture their clothing in their own villages even as they prepare their own food. These villages cannot retain the freedom they have enjoyed from time immemorial, if they do not control the production of prime necessities

of life. Western observers hastily argue from Western conditions that what may be true of them must be true of India where conditions are different in so many material respects. Application of the laws of economics must vary with varying conditions.

Not a Blessing

The machinery method is no doubt easy. But it is not necessarily a blessing on that account. The descent to a certain place is easy but dangerous. The method of the hand is a blessing, in the present case at any rate, because it is hard. If the craze for the machinery method continues, it is highly likely that a time will come when we shall be so incapacitated and weak that we shall begin to curse ourselves for having forgotten the use of the living machines given to us by God. Millions cannot keep themselves fit by games and athletics. And why should they exchange the useful, productive, hardy occupations for the useless, unproductive and expensive games and exercises? They are all right to-day for a change and recreation. They will jar upon us when they become a necessary occupation in order that we may have the appetite for eating the food in the production of which we had no hand or part.

Old is not Bad

Lastly, I do not subscribe to the belief that everything old is bad. Truth is old and difficult. Untruth has many attractions. But I would gladly go back to the very old Golden Age of Truth. Good old brown

bread is any day superior to the pasty white bread which has lost must of its nutritive value in going through the various processes of refinement. The list of old and yet good things can be endlessly multiplied. The spinning wheel is one such thing, at any rate for India.

When India becomes self-supporting, self-reliant, and proof against temptations and exploitation, she will cease to be the object of greedy attraction for any Power in the West or the East, and will then feel secure without having to carry the burden of expensive armament. Her internal economy will be India's strongest bulwork against aggression.

—*Young India*: July 2, 1931.

30. A CURSE FOR MANKIND

“WHAT is your view about the industrialization of India?”

Industrialism is, I am afraid, going to be a curse for mankind. Exploitation of one nation by another cannot go on for all time. Industrialism depends entirely on your capacity to exploit, on foreign markets being open to you, and on the absence of competitors. It is because these factors are getting less and less every day for England that its number of unemployed is mounting up daily.

A Menace to the World

And if that is the state of England, a vast country like India cannot expect to benefit by industrialization. In fact, India, when it begins to exploit other nations—as it must if it becomes industrialized—will be a curse

for other nations, a menace to the world. And why should I think of industrializing India to exploit other nations? Don't you see the tragedy of the situation, viz., that we can find work for our 300 millions unemployed, but England can find none for its three millions and is faced with a problem that baffles the greatest intellects of England.

Dark Future

The future of industrialism is dark. England has got successful competitors in America, Japan, France, Germany. It has competitors in the handful of mills in India, and as there has been an awakening in India, even so there will be an awakening in South Africa with its vastly richer resources—natural, mineral and human. The mighty English look quite pigmies before the mighty races of Africa. They are noble savages after all, you will say. They are certainly noble, but no savages and in the course of a few years the Western nations may cease to find in Africa a dumping ground for their wares. And if the future of industrialism is dark for the West, would it not be darker still for India?

—*Young India*: Nov. 12, 1931.

31. BACK TO VILLAGE INDUSTRIES

IT is sad that through highly industrialized processes every American owns what is equivalent to 36 slaves. If we use America as our model, and if we allowed only 30 slaves to every Indian instead of 36, out of our 31

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crores of human beings 30 crores must perform *hari-kari* or be killed off. I know that some enthusiastic patriots will not only not mind such a process, but they will welcome it. They will say that it is better to have one crore of happy, contented, prosperous Indians, armed to the teeth, than to have 30 crores of unarmed creatures who can hardly walk. I have no answer to that philosophy, because, being saturated with the Harijan mentality, I can only think in terms of the millions of villagers and can only make my happiness dependent upon that of the poorest amongst them, and want to live only if they can live. My very simple mind cannot go beyond the little spindle of the little wheel which I can carry about with me from place to place and which I can manufacture without difficulty. In this connection, a friend sends me the following paragraph which is going round the Press:

“To relieve unemployment in certain industries, the Nazis have ordered the stoppage of the use of machines which were displacing human labour. Commenting on this interdiction. *The Manchester Guardian* remarks: ‘There has been a great deal of discussion about the effects of machinery in aggravating the unemployment crisis, but it has been left to the Nazis to do the logical thing and stop using it. It is only a little while since the world was asked to admire the miraculous triumph of labour-saving rationalization in Germany. Now the Government is bent on fighting the machine, either by prohibiting its use or by compelling employers to work shorter hours and employ more men. Mr. Gandhi’s efforts to replace the spinning frame by the hand-wheel and the mechanical loom by the handloom are being paralleled closely in the German cigar and glass industries.

“*The Guardian* concludes its remarks by observing that, if Germany’s ethics become mediaeval, there is no reason why her economics should not become mediaeval also. Replying to these comments, a correspondent writes in *The Guardian*:

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'Hitler, Gandhi and others, who in different ways are endeavouring to slow production to a point at which all goods are consumed may be reverting to mediaeval methods, but handicrafts are neither retrograde nor barbaric. They are taught in every progressive elementary and secondary school... Unless unemployment is abolished within a reasonable time, even by means that appear novel and unorthodox, the machinery age will disappear in revolution and wars that will destroy us all. So long as machinery promotes the happiness and prosperity of the masses as well as the classes, it is a beneficent agent. But when it leads to the unemployment and starvation of millions, as is happening in the highly industrialized countries of the West, it becomes a curse. Machinery exists for man, and not *vice versa*, and must be made subservient to the well-being of the people and should not be allowed to become their master.'

That the village industries in Germany are being revived at the point of the sword is not relevant here. What is relevant is that a country, which has shown the highest technical skill and is amongst the most advanced in the matter of industrialization, is trying to go back to village industries for solving the problem of her terrible unemployment.

—*Harijan*: Oct. 27, 1933.

32. INDUSTRIALIZATION

WHEN as a nation we adopt the spinning wheel, we not only solve the question of unemployment but we declare that we have no intention of exploiting any nation, and we also end the exploitation of the poor by the rich. It is a spiritual force which in the initial stages works slowly, but as soon as it gets started, it begins working in geometrical progression, *i.e.*, when it gets into the life of the people. When I say I want independence for the millions, I mean to say not only that

the millions may have something to eat and to cover themselves with, but that they will be free from the exploitation of people here and outside. We can never industrialize India, unless of course, we reduce our population from 350 millions to 35 millions or hit upon markets wider than our own and dependent on us. It is time we realized that, where there is unlimited human power, complicated machinery on a large scale has no place. An Indian economist told me once that every American had 36 slaves, for, the machine did the work of 36 slaves. Well, Americans may need that, but not we. We cannot industrialize ourselves, unless we make up our minds to enslave humanity.

—*Harijan*: Sept. 14, 1934.

33. MASS PRODUCTION V. PRODUCTION BY THE MASSES

“**R**EVIVAL of village industries and handicrafts is all right”, remarked a young friend the other day, with the air of one making a big concession to the earnestness of his adversary’s conviction rather than its correctness. “It will beautify life which our poor villagers badly need. But I very much doubt, sir, whether our ‘expanding universe’, as Mr. Jeans has put it, can do without mass production. No, sir, in ‘mass production’ coupled with mass control lies the only hope of the toiling millions. What has Gandhiji to offer in its place?”

The poser put me in mind of a conversation on the question of machinery that Gandhiji had with an Ame-

rican Press correspondent in London during the Second Round Table Conference. "Production by the masses", I replied, repeating an expression that Gandhiji had used on that occasion.

About a year prior to the meeting, the American friend in question had met Mr. Ford in America and, in the course of his talk with him, had among other things mentioned to him his view that the current European conditions were opposed to the continuance of mass production. Mr. Ford had replied that those conditions were bound to pass away in a short time and that a demand for cheaper things would soon spring up. "It is a question of raising the standard of living of the people," had concluded Mr. Ford.

Mass Production

"Do you feel, Gandhiji," asked the friend, "that mass production will raise the standard of living of the people?"

"I do not believe in it at all," replied Gandhiji. "There is a tremendous fallacy behind Mr. Ford's reasoning. Without simultaneous distribution on an equally mass scale, the production can result only in a great world tragedy. Take Mr. Ford's cars. The saturation point is bound to be reached, soon or late. Beyond that point, the production of cars cannot be pushed. What will happen then?"

"Mass production takes no note of the real requirement of the consumer. If mass production were in it-

self a virtue, it should be capable of indefinite multiplication. But it can be definitely shown that mass production carries within it its own limitations. If all countries adopted the system of mass production, there would not be a big enough market for their products. Mass production must then come to a stop."

The Problem of Distribution

"I wonder," proceeded the interlocutor, "whether you feel that this saturation point has already arrived in the Western world. Mr. Ford says that there never can be too many articles of quality, that the needs of the world are constantly increasing and that, therefore, while there might be saturation in the market for a given commodity, the general saturation would never be reached."

"Without entering upon an elaborate argument," replied Gandhiji, "I would categorically state my conviction that the mania for mass production is responsible for the world crises. Granting for the moment that the machinery may supply all the needs of humanity, still it would concentrate production in particular areas, so that you would have to go in a round-about way to regulate distribution; whereas, if there is production and distribution both in the respective areas where things are required, it is automatically regulated, and there is less chance for fraud, none for speculation."

Mr. Ford's Remedy

The American friend mentioned Mr. Ford's favourite plan of decentralization of industry by the use of elec-

tric power conveyed on wires to the remotest corner, instead of coal and steam, as a possible remedy, and drew up the picture of hundreds and thousands of small, neat, smokeless villages, dotted with factories, run by village communities. "Assuming all that to be possible", he finally asked Gandhiji, "how far will it meet your objection?" "My objection won't be met by that", replied Gandhiji, "because, while it is true that you will be producing things in innumerable areas, the power will come from one selected centre. That, in the end, I think, would be found to be disastrous. It would place such a limitless power in one human agency that I dread to think of it. The consequence, for instance, of such a control of power would be that I would be dependent on that power for light, water, even air, and so on. That, I think, would be terrible."

When Masses Wake Up

The friend was struck by the argument. "Mr. Gandhi", he remarked, "this is a particularly appropriate moment, it seems to me, for you to be visiting London, because, apart from the political questions, it seems to me to be a time when the Western world is disillusioned in regard to machinery in general, in regard to the mass-production system we have built up in Germany and America in particular, and people are feeling somewhat bewildered and doubtful as to their value and asking themselves whether we have not, after all, overdone it. Have you any idea as to what Europe and

America should do to solve the problem presented by too much machinery?"

"You see," answered Gandhiji, "that these nations are able to exploit the so-called weaker or unorganized races of the world. Once those races gain this elementary knowledge and decide that they are no more going to be exploited, they will simply be satisfied with what they can provide themselves. Mass-production, then, at least where the vital necessities are concerned, will disappear."

"As a world organization?"

"Yes."

"But even those races will require more and more goods as their needs multiply."

"They will then produce for themselves. And when that happens, mass-production, in the technical sense in which it is understood in the West, ceases."

"You mean to say it becomes local."

"When production and consumption both become localized, the temptation to speed up production, indefinitely and at any price, disappears. All the endless difficulties and problems that our present-day economic system presents, too, would then come to an end. Take a concrete instance. England to-day is the cloth shop of the world. It, therefore, needs to hold a world in bondage to secure its market. But under the change that I have envisaged, she would limit her production

to the actual needs of her 34 millions of population. When that need is satisfied, the production would necessarily stop. It won't be continued for the sake of bringing in more gold irrespective of the needs of a people and at the risk of their impoverishment. There would be no unnatural accumulation of hoards in the pockets of the few, and want in the midst of plenty in regard to the rest, as is happening to-day, for instance, in America. America is to-day able to hold the world in fee by selling all kinds of trinkets, or by selling her unrivalled skill, which she has a right to do. She has reached the acme of mass-production, and yet she has not been able to abolish unemployment or want. There are still thousands, perhaps millions of people in America who live in misery, in spite of the phenomenal riches of the few. The whole of the American nation is not benefitted by this mass-production."

Distribution

"The fault lies in distribution," observed the journalist friend. "It means that, whilst our system of production has reached a high pitch of perfection, the distribution is still defective. If distribution could be equalized, would not mass-production be sterilized of its evils?"

"No," replied Gandhiji, "the evil is inherent in the system. Distribution can be equalized when production is localized; in other words, when the distribution is simultaneous with production. Distribution will never be equal so long as you want to tap other markets of

the world to dispose of your goods. That does not mean that the world has no use for the marvellous advances in science and organization that the Western nations have made. It only means that the Western nations have to use their skill. If they want to use their skill abroad, from philanthropic motives, America would say: "Well, we know how to make bridges, we won't keep it a secret, but we say to the whole world, we will teach you how to make bridges and we will charge you nothing." America says: 'where other nations can grow one blade of wheat, we can grow two thousand.' Then, America should teach that art free of charge to those who will learn it, but not aspire to grow wheat for the whole world, which would spell a sorry day for the world indeed."

Example of Russia

The American friend next asked Gandhiji, referring to Russia, whether it was not a country that had developed mass-production without exploiting, in Gandhiji's sense, the less industrialized nations, or without falling into the pit of unequal distribution. "In other words," replied Gandhiji, controlled industry, *i.e.*, an economic order in which both production and distribution are controlled and regulated by the State as is being to-day done in Soviet Russia. Well, it is a new experiment. How far it will ultimately succeed, I do not know. If it were not based on force, I would dote on it. But to-day, since it is based on force, I do not know how far and where it will take us."

Mass Production Minus Force

“Then, you do not envisage mass-production as an ideal future of India?” questioned the American friend.

“Oh yes, mass-production, certainly,” replied Gandhiji, but not based on force. After all, the message of the spinning-wheel is that. It is mass-production, but mass-production in people’s own homes. If you multiply individual production to millions of times, would it not give you mass-production on a tremendous scale? But I quite understand that your “mass-production” is a technical term for production by the fewest possible number through the aid of highly complicated machinery. I have said to myself that that is wrong. My machinery must be of the most elementary type which I can put in the homes of the millions. Under my system, again, it is labour which is the current coin, not metal. Any person who can use his labour has that coin, has wealth: He converts his labour into cloth, he converts his labour into grain. If he wants paraffin oil, which he cannot himself produce, he uses his surplus grain for getting the oil. It is exchange of labour on free, fair and equal terms—hence it is no robbery. You may object that this is a reversion to the primitive system of barter. But is not all international trade based on the barter system?

Concentration of Production

“Look, again, at another advantage that this system affords. You can multiply it to any extent. But con-

centration of production *ad infinitum* can only lead to unemployment. You may say that workers thrown out of work by the introduction of improved machinery will find occupations in other jobs. But in an organized country where there are only fixed and limited avenues of employment, where the worker has become highly skilled in the use of one particular kind of machinery, you know from your own experience that this is hardly possible. Are there not over three millions unemployed in England to-day? A question was put to me only the other day: 'What are we doing to-day with these three millions unemployed?' They cannot shift from factory to field in a day. It is a tremendous problem."

Machinery and Agriculture

This brought the discussion to the employment of machinery in agriculture.

"Would not machine agriculture make a great difference to India, as it has to America and Canada?" asked the American friend.

"Probably," replied Gandhiji. "But that is a question I do not consider myself fit to answer. We in India have not been able to use much complicated machinery in agriculture with profit so far. We do not exclude machinery. We are making cautious experiments. But we have not found power-driven agricultural machinery to be necessary."

The Sane Limit

The American friend, in common with the rest, had come imbued with the belief that Gandhiji was a sworn enemy of all machinery. "Some people have the impression", he remarked, "that you are opposed to machinery in general. This is not true, I believe."

"That is quite wrong," answered Gandhiji, "the spinning wheel is also machinery. It is a beautiful work of art. It typifies the use of machinery on a universal scale. It is machinery reduced to the terms of the masses."

"So, you are opposed to machinery, only because and when it concentrates production and distribution in the hands of the few,"* finally summed up the American friend.

"You are right. I hate privilege and monopoly. Whatever cannot be shared with the masses is taboo to me. That is all", answered Gandhiji.

—*Harijan*: Nov. 2, 1934.

34. ABOUT MECHANIZATION

ADVICE has been given to me that I must look for salvation in the direction of using the powers of Nature that the inventive brain of man has brought under subjection. The critics say that water, air, oil

* "I am personally opposed to great trusts and concentration of industries by means of elaborate machinery. If India takes to *Khaddar* and all it means, I do not lose the hope of India taking only as much of the modern machinery as may be considered necessary for the amenities of life and labour-saving devices."

and electricity should be fully utilized as they are being utilized in the go-ahead West. They say that control over these hidden powers of Nature enables every American to have 33 slaves.

Repeat the process in India, and I dare say that it will thirty-three times enslave every inhabitant of this land, instead of giving everyone thirty-three slaves.

Mechanization is good when the hands are too few for the work intended to be accomplished. It is an evil when there are more hands than required for the work, as is the case in India. I may not use a plough for digging a few square yards of a plot of land. The problem with us is not how to find leisure for the teeming millions inhabitants of our villages. The problem is how to utilize their idle hours, which are equal to the working days of six months in the year.

A Menace to the Villagers

Strange as it may appear, every mill generally is a menace to the villagers. I have not worked out the figures, but I am quite safe in saying that every mill-hand does the work of at least ten labourers doing the same work in their villages. In other words, he earns more than he did in his village at the expense of ten fellow-villagers. Thus, spinning and weaving mills have deprived the villagers of a substantial means of livelihood. It is no answer in reply to say that they turn out cheaper, better cloth, if they do so at all. For, if they have displaced thousands of workers, the cheap-

est mill cloth is dearer than the dearest *Khadi* woven in the villages. Coal is not dear for the coal-miner who can use it there and then, nor is *Khadi* dear for the villager who manufactures his own *Khadi*. But if the cloth manufactured in mills displaces village hands, rice mills and flour mills not only displace thousands of poor women workers, but damage the health of the whole population in the bargain. Where people have no objection to taking flesh diet and can afford it, white flour and polished rice may do no harm, but in India, where millions can get no flesh diet even when they have no objection to eating it if they can get it, it is sinful to deprive them of nutritious and vital elements contained in whole wheat meal and unpolished rice. It is time medical men and others combined to instruct the people on the danger attendant upon the use of white flour and polished rice.

I have drawn attention to some broad glaring facts to show that the way to take work to the villagers is not through mechanization, but that it lies through revival of the industries they have hitherto followed.

—*Harijan*: Nov. 16, 1934.

35. MY POSITION

“To my unaided mind you appear to be opening the first campaign of an endless and quixotic war against modern civilization. Long ago you proclaimed yourself its sleepless enemy, and now you would, if you could, turn it back on the course it has pursued for some millenia. I reel at the mere thought.”

This is from an intimate letter from a dear friend. As the view expressed so frankly by the friend is, I

know, shared by quite a number of friends, it is well for me to explain my position.

In seeking to revive such village industries as are capable of being revived, I am making no such attempt as the friend ascribes to me. I am trying to do what every lover of village life, everyone who realizes the tragic meaning of the disintegration of villages is doing or trying to do. Why am I turning back the course of modern civilization, when I ask the villager to grind his own meal, eat it whole, including the nourishing bran, or when I ask him to turn his sugarcane into *gud* for his own requirements, if not for sale? Am I turning back the course of modern civilization, when I ask the villagers not merely to grow raw produce, but to turn it into marketable products and thereby add a few more pies to their daily income?

Modern Civilization

And, surely, modern civilization is not millenia old. We can almost give its birth an exact date. If I could do it, I would most assuredly destroy or radically change much that goes under the name of modern civilization. But that is an old story of life. The attempt is undoubtedly there. Its success depends upon God. But the attempt to revive and encourage the remunerative village industries is not part of such an attempt, except in so far as every one of my activities, including the propagation of non-violence, can be described as such an attempt. The revival of village industries is but an extension of the *Khadi* effort. Hand-spun cloth, hand-

made paper, hand-pounded rice, home-made bread and jam, are not uncommon in the West. Only there they do not have one-hundredth of the importance they have in India. For, with us, their revival means life, their destruction means death to the villagers, as he who runs may see. Whatever the Machine Age may do, it will never give employment to the millions whom the wholesale introduction of power machinery must displace.

—*Harijan*: Jan. 4, 1935.

36. CURSE OF MECHANIZATION

"HOW will you fight the curse of mechanization, Gandhiji?" M. Halide Edibe Hanum asked with a painful tremor in her voice, in which the chords of her sensitive self seemed to tremble. "How will you keep human beings human souls?"

"It is all implied", said Gandhiji, "in my non-violence. It is cruel, it is sinful, to think of mechanization in a country of 350 million human beings. Every human being is a machine, only it should be kept oiled and in proper trim. That is what I am trying to do."

"Political freedom, I am sure, you are going to win", she said, "but mechanization, I am afraid, might get hold of India."

"Then, there is no escape from violence", said Gandhiji. "I saw it as long ago as 1908, and ever since I have shaped all my activities in terms of non-violence. Complete mechanization is impossible in India without its resulting in violence in some shape or other."

Nursery of Souls

"I know, I know. But it's so difficult. The soul has to be preserved. I have written a play called *Masques and Souls*. There are more masques than souls; but if you will prepare a nursery of souls, it would be all to the good."

"Oh yes, if we can find even one true witness to the Truth", said Gandhiji.

"I am not very optimistic, for the opposite side is very strong", said Madame Halide.

"I have never lost my optimism", said Gandhiji, assuring her. "In seemingly darkest hours, hope has burnt bright within me."

"You cannot kill your own hope, I know", she said in serene exultation.

"You are absolutely right. I cannot kill the hope myself. I must say I cannot give an ocular demonstration to justify the hope. But there is no defeat in me."

"There will never be, I am sure, there will never be."

—*Harijan*: Jan. 25, 1935.

37. LARGE-SCALE INDUSTRIES

Q. AM I wrong in suggesting that, from the resuscitation of dead village industries, such as you contemplate, to the industrialization of India on human, rational and intelligent lines (as opposed to greedy capitalism),

is an initial step?

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A. I do not know if a vast country like India, with her millions of people having four months of enforced idleness on their hand, can afford to have large scale industries and yet live a life of tolerable comfort. Large scale, centralized industries in India, except such industries as cannot be possibly carried on in villages, must mean starvation of millions, unless honourable employment is found for the displaced millions.

—*Harijan*: Feb. 8, 1935.

38. LIVING MACHINES

INDIA was once the land of gold. Not that it produced much gold, but it had such treasures of art, it produced cloth of such rich quality and spices of such value that other lands paid for them in treasures of gold. We have lost that proud position to-day and have become mere hewers of wood and drawers of water. But even now we can regain that proud position, for, our natural resources are unique and no other country in the world, excepting China, can boast of the crores of living machines we have.

Now, how can a country with crores of living machines afford to have a machine which will displace the labour of crores of living machines? It would spell their unemployment and their ruin. We have to employ all those crores of human machines that are idle, we have to make them intelligent machines and, unless cities decide to depend for the necessities of life and for most of their other needs on the villages, this can never happen. We are guilty of a grievous wrong against the villagers, and

the only way in which we can expiate it is by encouraging them to revive their lost industries and arts by assuring them of a ready market. There is no one more patient and forbearing than God, but there comes a limit even to His patience and forbearance. If we neglect our duty to our villages, we shall be courting our own ruin.

—*Harijan*: March 1, 1935.

39. WORK AND LEISURE

A FRIEND asked Gandhiji: "You do not seem to have regard to the question of leisure. Too much work leaves little leisure to the poorer classes for any intellectual thinking and recreation, and you are now seeking to make them work more."

"Is that really so? I am trying to deal with people who do not know what to do with their enforced leisure. It is their enforced idleness that has made them like so many lifeless stones. There is such inertia that some of them do not want to be disturbed."

"You will certainly give employment where it is needed. But are you not putting an excessive emphasis on dull monotonous work when you ask them to grind their own corn and husk their own rice?"

Joy of Creation

"It is no more monotonous than the idle hours hanging heavy on their hands, and it will cease to be monotonous when they realize that they not only earn a few coppers but preserve their own health and that of their coun-

trymen. It is certainly not more monotonous than working away in modern factories. Any work, however humdrum, which does not take away the joy of creating something, is not monotonous. You go to a huge shoe-making factory. Some people would be engaged in making soles, some in making the uppers, some in doing other parts. This is monotonous, for, they work without intelligence, but there is no monotony about the work of the shoemaker who makes the whole shoe himself. His work will bear the impress of his skill, and he will have the joy of having created something himself. No, almost every thing depends on the spirit in which a thing is done. I would not mind being my own drawer of water and hewer of wood, provided I am doing the work intelligently and not because someone compels me to do so. All labour, when done intelligently and to some high purpose, becomes at once re-creation and recreation."

Hours of Work

"Pardon me, but when you insist on pure and simple physical work, all day long, don't you run the risk of making them intelligently dull? How many hours of physical work you think are necessary?"

"I would not mind working eight hours myself."

"I do not mean yourself. You have enough intellectual energy and creative talent to fill the rest of your hours. Yours should be regarded as an exceptional case. I know you can derive joy from eight hours' spinning."

"No. I want everyone to derive joy out of eight hours' work. Everything depends on the spirit in which work is done, and an eight hours' day of honest, clean labour leaves one enough time for intellectual pursuits. My object is to put an end to inertia and lethargy, and I would be immensely satisfied when I tell the world that every villager of India is earning Rs. 20 a month by the sweat of his brow."

—*Harijan*: March 8, 1935.

40. TWO CIVILIZATIONS

THERE is a difference between the civilization of the East—the civilization of India—and that of the West. It is not generally realized wherein the difference lies. Our geography is different, our history is different, our ways of living are different. Our continent, though vast, is a speck on the globe, but it is the most thickly populated, barring China.

Well, now the economics and civilization of a country, where the pressure of population on land is greatest, are and must be different from those of a country where the pressure is least. Sparsely populated, America may have need of machinery. India may not need it at all. Where there are millions upon millions of units of idle labour, it is no use thinking of labour-saving devices. If someone devised a machine which saved us the trouble of using our hands to eat, eating would cease to be a pleasure, it would become a torture. The reason of our poverty is the extinction of our industries and our consequent unemployment.

India is not Over-Populated

Some years ago, India's agricultural population was said to be 70 per cent. To-day, it is said to be 90 per cent. It does not mean that 90 per cent are agriculturists, but that, instead of 70 per cent who depended on land, 90 per cent are now driven to depend on land. In other words, whereas there were industries and crafts enough to feed the 20 per cent some time ago, these are no longer there and the people have thus been thrown on land. They thus steal their living, not because they want to, but because there is no more land.

Not that there is not enough land to feed our 35 crores. It is absurd to say that India is overpopulated and that the surplus population must die. I am sure that if all the land that is available was properly utilized and made to yield up to its capacity, it would surely maintain the whole population. Only we have got to be industrious and to make two blades of grass grow where one grows to-day.

—*Harijan*: May 11, 1935.

41. IN DEFENCE OF MACHINERY

A SOCIALIST, holding a brief for machinery, asked Gandhiji if the village industries movement was not meant to oust all machinery.

"Is not this wheel a machine?" was counter-question that Gandhiji, who was just then spinning, gave in reply.

"I do not mean this machine, but I mean bigger machinery".

“Do you mean Singer’s Sewing Machine? That, too, is protected by the village industries movement, for that matter any machinery which does not deprive masses of men of the opportunity to labour, but which helps the individual and adds to his efficiency, and which a man can handle at will without being its slave.”

Great Inventions

“But what about the great inventions? You would have nothing to do with electricity?”

“Who said so? If we could have electricity in every village home, I should not mind villagers plying their implements and tools with the help of electricity. But then the village communities or the State would own power houses, just as they have their grazing pastures. But where there is no electricity and no machinery, what are idle hands to do? Will you give them work, or would you have their owners cut them down for want of work?

“I would prize every invention of science made for the benefit of all. There is a difference between invention and invention. I should not care for asphixiating gases capable of killing masses of men at a time. The heavy machinery for work of public utility which cannot be undertaken by human labour has its inevitable place, but all that would be owned by the State and used entirely for the benefit of the people. I can have no consideration for machinery which is meant either to enrich the few

at the expense of the many, or without cause to displace the useful labour of many.

Indiscriminate Use

“But even you as a Socialist would not be in favour of an indiscriminate use of machinery. Take printing presses. They will go on. Take surgical instruments. How can one make them with one’s hands? Heavy machinery would be needed for them. But there is no machinery for the cure of idleness but this”, said Gandhiji pointing to his spinning wheel. “I can work it whilst I am carrying on this conversation with you, and am adding a little to the wealth of the country. This machine no one can oust.”

—*Harijan*: June 22, 1935.

42. FALLACIES

A CAREFUL observer of events and things writes:

“Cottage industries have a place. But, to be quite frank, I do not think that these can replace industries on a big scale. Leaving aside the financial interests of those controlling such industries, I think that it will not be in the interest of the country to work for the ruin of such industries which have been established and which can be established in this country. The greatest objection to machinery that has been urged is the growing tendency to reduce the number of men employed. This results in unemployment. The present method of distribution of profits may require readjustment. But leisure, if it can be well utilized, is more important than many other things. Merely to keep a large number employed at work, I do not think it is necessary to discard economic and efficient machinery.”

The writer is an honest thinker and yet, as it seems to me, has missed the whole aim of the work being done.

Our aim is not to replace or to ruin the big industries, but it is to revive the dead or dying industries and there-through to find employment for the millions who are semi-starved because they are forced to live in complete or semi-idleness. This is a constructive, not a destructive, programme.

Aim of Big Industries

The big industries can never, they don't hope to, overtake the unemployed millions. Their aim is primarily to make money for the few owners, never the direct one of finding employment for the unemployed millions. The organizers of *Khadi* and other village industries don't hope in the near future to affect the big industries. They may hope to bring a ray of light into the dark dungeons, miscalled cottages, of the villagers. My esteemed correspondent seems to give up his whole case when he says 'leisure, if it can be well utilized, is more important than many other things'. The activities which he disapproves of are intended to accomplish the very end he has in view. They are designed to well utilize the leisure hours of the idle millions.

Machinery Must Ease Human Effort

In this, there is no war against the misuse and abuse of machinery, *i.e.*, its use to the detriment of the millions. Dead machinery must not be pitted against the millions of living machines represented by the villagers scattered in the seven hundred thousand villages of India. Machinery to be well used has to help and ease human effort.

The present use of machinery tends more and more to concentrate wealth in the hands of a few in total disregard of millions of men and women whose bread is snatched by it out of their mouths. The movement has been conceived so as to minimize the evil wrought by the craze for amassing large fortunes through the use of dead tools in order to avoid having to deal with very sensitive human tools.

—*Harijan*: Sept. 14, 1935.

43. MY INVINCIBLE FAITH

I HAVE the conviction within me that when all these achievements of the Machine Age will have disappeared, these our handicrafts will remain; when all exploitation will have ceased, service and honest labour will remain. It is because this faith sustains me that I am going on with my work. After all, where is there any cause for despair? What are a few years in the vast stretch of Eternity? A study of human origins would carry us back to millions of years. Indomitable faith in their work sustained men like Stephenson and Columbus. Faith in my work sustains me, but there is also added to it the conviction that all the other things that seem to challenge my faith are doomed.

Rivalries

Don't you see that if India becomes industrialized, we shall need a Nadirshah to find out other worlds to exploit, that we shall have to pit ourselves against the naval and military power of British and Japan and

America, of Russia and Italy? My head reels to think of these rivalries. No. I am clear that whilst this Machine Age aims at converting men into machines, I am aiming at reinstating man turned machine into his original estate.

—*Harijan*: Nov. 30, 1935.

44. THE PRICE OF LEISURE

"MY difficulty," said the worker, "is this, that though people in our villages are working like asses from morning until night without an hour's respite, they do not get enough to eat. And you are asking them to labour still more!"

"What you say is news to me. The villages I know are those in which quantities of time are being wasted. But if, as you say, there are people who are being over-worked, I am asking such people to accept nothing less than a living wage for nothing more than 8 hours' work."

Human v. Power-Driven Machines

"But why not accept the machine with all its good points, eliminating the bad ones?"

"I cannot afford to keep our human machines idle. We have such an amount of human power lying idle that we have no room for other power-driven machines."

"Introduce the power-driven machines and get them to work for only as long as is needed for our purposes."

“How do you mean? Supposing X produced all the cloth we needed, in mills specially constructed for the purpose, and gave work to say three million men, also distributing all the profit between them, what then? Then these three million men will be having all the money that used to be distributed between 300 million a hundred years ago.”

“No, sir,” argued the friend, “I propose that our men should not work more than is necessary for our purposes. Some work is indeed necessary for all of us, but why should we work, say more than a couple of hours a day and not devote the rest of our time to pleasant occupations?”

“So you would be satisfied if our men were to work only for one hour a day?”

“That should be worked out. But I should certainly be satisfied.”

“Well, there’s the rub. I should never be satisfied until all men had plenty of productive work, say eight hours a day.”

Why Insist on Eight Hours’ a Day?

“But why, I wonder, should you insist on this eight hours’ minimum?”

“Because I know that millions will not employ themselves in work for the sake of it. If they did not need to work for their bread, they would lack the incentive. Supposing a few millionaires from America came and offered to send us all our foodstuffs and implored us not

to work but to permit them to give vent to their philanthropy, I should refuse point-blank to accept their kind offer.”

“That would be because the offer would hurt your self-respect!”

“No, not only because of that; but especially because it strikes at the root of the fundamental law of our being, viz., that we must work for our bread, that we eat our bread by the sweat of our brow.”

Guidance is not Dictatorship

“But that is your personal law. Would you leave the organization of society to society itself, or would you leave it to a few good guides?”

“I should leave it to a few good guides.”

“Which means that you are for a dictatorship.”

“No, for the simple reason that my fundamental principle is non-violence and I should not coerce any individual or community. Guidance is not dictatorship.”

—*Harijan*: Dec. 7, 1935.

45. MACHINERY AND LEISURE

A FACTORY employs a few hundreds and renders thousands unemployed. I may produce tons of oil from an oil mill, but I also drive thousands of oilmen out of employment. I call this a destructive energy, whereas production by the labour of millions of hands is constructive and conducive to the common good. Mass

production through power-driven machinery, even when State-owned, will be of no avail.*

But why not, it is asked, save the labour of millions, and give them more leisure for intellectual pursuits? Leisure is good and necessary upto a point only. God created man to eat his bread in the sweat of his brow, and I dread the prospect of our being able to produce all that we want, including our foodstuffs, out of a conjurer's hat.

—*Harijan*: May 16, 1936.

46. THE LURE OF LEISURE

Q. WHY do you insist on eight hours' manual work a day? Is it not possible in a well ordered society to reduce the working day to two hours, and then leave the citizen ample leisure for intellectual and artistic pursuits?

A. We know that those who get all that leisure—both the working and the intellectual classes—do not make the best use of it. In fact, we too often find the idle mind being turned into the Devil's workshop.

Q. No; he could not be idling away. Supposing we divided the day into two hours' physical labour and six hours' intellectual labour; would it not be good for the nation?

A. I do not know that it would be feasible. I have not mathematically calculated it, but if a man will do

*"Millions of workmen must not live on the margin of starvation so that the few engaged in production by power-driven machinery may have more than they need. In the absence of State protection, public opinion should be so cultivated that it will refuse to exploit the toilers of the land."

—*Harijan*: Aug. 31, 1935.

the intellectual labour only for profit and not for the nation, I am sure that the scheme will break down; unless, of course, the State pays him amply for the two hours' labour and compels him to do other work without paying him anything. That would be a fine thing, but it cannot be done without a kind of State conscription.

Virtue of Physical Labour

Q. But take, for instance, you. You cannot, in the nature of things, do eight hours' physical labour, and have to do eight hours' or more intellectual work. You do not abuse your leisure?

A. It is compulsory work and leaves no leisure, as, for instance, it would if I was going out to play tennis. But I tell you, even taking my case, that I am sure our minds would be infinitely better if we laboured with our hands for eight hours. We would not have a single idle thought, and I may tell you that my mind is not entirely free from idle thoughts. Even now I am what I am, because I realized the value of physical labour at a very early stage of my life.

Q. But then if physical work has such inherent virtue, our people have been working more than eight hours a day, not with any appreciable effect on the purity or strength of their minds.

A. Physical labour by itself is not an education even as mental labour is not. It has been with our people deadly drudgery without their knowing this, and that deadens one's finer instincts. That is where I have my

strongest complaint against the *savarna* Hindus. They have rendered work for the proletariat a task of hard drudgery, from which they have no pleasure and in which they have no interest. If they had been considered members of the society enjoying the same status as they, theirs would have been the proudest position in life. This is supposed to be the *Kali Yuga*. In the *Satya Yuga* or Golden Age, whenever it was, the society I dare say was better ordered than to-day. Ours is an ancient land where civilizations have come and gone, and it is difficult to say what exactly we were like at a particular age. But there is no doubt that we are where we are because we have long neglected the *Shudras*. To-day's village culture, if culture it can be called, is an awful culture. The villagers live as worse than animals. Nature compels animals to work and live naturally. We have so debased our working classes that they cannot work and live naturally. If our people had laboured intelligently and with joy, we should have been quite different to-day.

Work and Culture

Q. Work and culture cannot be separated, then?

A. No. They tried to do it in ancient Rome and failed miserably. Culture without labour, or culture which is not the fruit of labour would be 'Vomitoria' as a Roman Catholic writer says. The Romans made indulgence a habit, and were ruined. Man cannot develop his mind by simply writing and reading or making speeches all day long. All

my reading I tell you was done in the leisure hours I got in jails, and I have benefited by it because all of it was done not desultorily but for some purpose. And though I have worked physically for days and months for eight hours on end, I don't think I suffered from mental decay. I have often walked as much as 40 miles a day and yet never felt dull.

Q. But you had this mental equipment.

A. No fear. You don't know how mediocre I was at school and in England. I had never the courage to speak at debating society meetings or even in a gathering of vegetarians. No. Don't you run away with the thought I was blessed with any extraordinary powers. God, I think, advisedly did not give me then the power to speak. You must know, among us, I am the least read man.

—*Harijan*: Aug. 1, 1936.

47. AN UNNATURAL POSITION

Q. SO, then, you are against this Machine Age?

A. To say that is to caricature my views. I am not against machinery as such, but I am totally opposed to it when it masters us. Japan and America and England are doing it to-day... Only a few years ago we manufactured our own cloth, and now we get it from Japan and England. It is an unnatural position. We could make enough cloth for ourselves and the whole world. Our country abounds in natural resources. There is something most hideously wrong in sending one's own cotton out and getting manufactured goods. Nine crore

rupees worth of cattle hides are exported from here only to return to us as manufactured products. There is no reason why this should happen.

Q. You would not industrialize India?

A. I would indeed, in my sense of the term. The village communities should be revived. Indian villages produced and supplied to the Indian towns and cities all their wants. India became impoverished when our cities became foreign markets and began to drain the villages dry by dumping cheap and shoddy goods from foreign lands.

Natural Economy

Q. You would then go back to the natural economy?

A. Yes. Otherwise I should go back to the city. I am quite capable of running a big enterprise, but I deliberately sacrificed the ambition not as a sacrifice, but because my heart rebelled against it. For, I should have no share in the spoliation of the nation which is going on from day to day. But I am industrializing the village in a different way. I shall show you a village product which I am sure compares favourably with American toffee. Tell me if you do not prefer this *gud* (palm-juice *gud*) to American toffee.

—*Harijan*: Feb. 27, 1937.

48. NO EXPLOITATION :

NO INDUSTRIALIZATION

DR. JOHN DE BOER : There is one thing now which I do not understand. I am a Socialist, and whilst as a

believer in non-violence the Scheme* appeals to me most, I feel as a Socialist that the Scheme would cut India adrift from the world, whereas we have to integrate with the whole world, and Socialism does it as nothing else does.

Gandhiji: I have no difficulty. We do not want to cut adrift from the whole world. We will have a free interchange with all nations, but the present forced interchange has to go. We do not want to be exploited, neither do we want to exploit any other nation. Through the Scheme we look forward to making all children producers, and so to change the face of the whole nation, for it will permeate the whole of our social being. But that does not mean that we cut adrift from the whole world. There will be nations that will want to interchange with others, because they cannot produce certain things. They will certainly depend on other nations for them, but the nations that will provide for them should not exploit them.

Simplifying Life

Dr. John De Boer: But if you simplify your life to such an extent that you need nothing from other countries, you will isolate yourselves from them; whereas I want you to be responsible for America also.

Gandhiji: It is by ceasing to exploit and to be exploited that we can be responsible for America. For, America will then follow our example and there will be no difficulty in a free interchange between us.

* The reference is to Wardha Scheme of Education.—Ed.

Dr. John De Boer: But you want to simplify life and cut out industrialization.

Gandhiji: If I could produce all my country's wants by means of the labour of 30,000 people instead of 30 million I should not mind it, provided that the thirty million are not rendered idle and unemployed. I know that Socialists would introduce industrialization to the extent of reducing working hours to one or two in a day, but I do not want it.

Dr. John De Boer: They would have leisure.

Gandhiji: Leisure to play hockey?

Dr. John De Boer: Not only for that, but creative handicrafts for instance.

Gandhiji: Creative handicrafts I am asking them to engage in. But they will produce with their hands by working eight hours a day.

President Hoover's Formula

Dr. John De Boer: You do not, of course, look forward to a state of society when every house will have a radio and everyone a car. That was President Hoover's formula. He wanted not one, but two radios and two cars.

Gandhiji: If we had so many cars, there would be very little room for walking.

Dr. John De Boer: I agree. We have about 40,000 deaths by accidents every year, and thrice as many cases of people being maimed.

Gandhiji: At any rate, I am not going to live to see the day when all villages in India will have radios.

Economy of Abundance

Dr. John De Boer: Pandit Jawaharlal seems to think in terms of the economy of abundance.

Gandhiji: I know. But what is abundance? Not the capacity to destroy millions of tons of wheat as you do in America?

Dr. John De Boer: Yes, that's the nemesis of capitalism. They do not destroy now, but they are being paid for NOT producing wheat. People indulged in the pastime of throwing eggs at one another, because the prices of the eggs had gone down.

Gandhiji: That is what we do not want. If by abundance you mean everyone having plenty to eat and drink and to clothe himself with, enough to keep his mind trained and educated, I should be satisfied. But I should not like to pack more stuff in my belly than I can digest, and more things than I can ever usefully use. But neither do I want poverty, penury, misery, dirt and dust in India.

Dr. John De Boer: But Pandit Jawaharlal says in his Autobiography you worship *Daridranarayana* and extol poverty for its own sake.

Gandhiji: I know.

—*Harijan*: Feb. 12, 1938.

49. LIMITS OF INDUSTRIALIZATION

FRYDMAN: What attitude should I, as a realist, adopt with regard to the tide of industrialization that is sweeping over the world? The ultimate ideal of having self-sufficient villages is, of course, there. But that can come about only where every one is cultured in the Indian sense of the word. Does not industrialization serve to level the ground? Is it not waste of energy merely to oppose it? Would it not be better to try to change its direction?

Gandhiji: You are an engineer. You will, therefore, appreciate an illustration from mechanics. You know the parallelogram of forces. There the forces do not neutralize each other. Each force acts freely along its own line and we get the resultant which indicates the final direction of motion. It is the same with the problem you have mentioned. As I look at Russia, where the apotheosis of industrialization has been reached, the life there does not appeal to me. To use the language of the *Bible*: "What shall it avail a man if he gain the whole world and lose his soul?" In modern terms, it is beneath human dignity to lose one's individuality and become a mere cog in the machine. I want every individual to become a full-blooded, fully developed member of society. The villages must become self-sufficient. I see no other solution if one has to work in terms of *Ahimsa*. Now I have that conviction. I know there are others who believe in industrialization. I work with all my being for my conviction. The process of adjust-

ment goes on all the time. I do not know what the outcome of it will be. But whatever it is, it will be to the good."

Compromise with Industrialization

Frydman: But, is no compromise with industrialization possible without imperilling the ideal of self-sufficient villages?

Gandhiji: Oh yes, railways are there. I do not avoid them. I hate motor cars, but I make use of them willy-nilly all the same. Again, I dislike fountain pens, but just now I am making use of one, though I carry a reed pen about in my box. Every time I use the fountain pen it hurts me, and I think of the neglected reed pen in my box. Compromise comes in at every step, but one must realize that it is a compromise, and keep the final goal constantly in front of the mind's eye.

Indian Masses

Frydman: When I turn from the busy West to masses in the Indian villages, I seem to be moving in a different world altogether in which stagnation reigns.

Gandhiji: Yes, so long as you look on the surface. But the moment you talk to them and they begin to speak, you will find that wisdom drops from their lips. Behind the crude exterior, you will find a deep reservoir of spirituality. I call this culture. You will not find such a thing in the West. You try to engage a European peasant in conversation, and you will find that he is

uninterested in things spiritual. In the case of the Indian villager, an age-old culture is hidden under an encrustment of crudeness. Take away the encrustation, remove his chronic poverty and his illiteracy, and you have the finest specimen of what a cultured, cultivated, free citizen should be.

—*Harijan*: Jan. 28, 1939.

50. TRAVELLING BY MOTOR OR RAIL

IT is never a pleasure to me to travel by motor or rail or even a cart. It is always a pleasure to walk. Nor should I mind in the least if every rail was removed, and men, except the sick and the maimed, had to walk to their business. I cannot only imagine but am working for a civilization in which possession of a car will be considered no merit and railways *will find no place*. It would not be for me an unhappy event if the world became once more as large as it used to be at one time.

Hind Swaraj

Hind Swaraj was written in 1908. Since then it has undergone many editions and has been translated in many languages of the world. I was asked last year by Shrimati Sophia Wadia to write a foreword for the edition that she was bringing out. I had the pleasure, therefore, of having to re-read it carefully. The reader may know that I could not revise a single idea. I had no desire to revise the language. It is a fair translation of the original in Gujarati.

The Key

The key to understand that incredibly simple (so simple as to be regarded foolish) booklet is to realize that it not an attempt to go back to the so-called ignorant, dark ages. But it is an attempt to see beauty in voluntary simplicity, poverty and slowness. I have pictured that as my ideal. I shall never reach it myself and hence cannot expect the nation to do so. But the modern rage for variety, for flying through the air, for multiplicity of wants, etc. have no fascination for me. They deaden the inner being in us. The giddy heights which man's ingenuity is attempting, take us away from our Maker who is nearer to us than the nails are to the flesh which they cover.

A Necessary Evil

Therefore, even whilst I am travelling at the rate of 40 miles per hour, I am conscious that it is a necessary evil, and that my best work is to be done in little Segaon, containing 700 souls, and in the neighbouring villages to which I can walk. But, being a highly practical man, I do not avoid railway travelling or motoring for the mere sake of looking foolishly consistent.

—*Harijan*: Oct. 14, 1939.

51. SOCIAL ORDER OF THE FUTURE

IF I can convert the country to my point of view, the social order of the future will be based predominantly on the *Charkha* and all it implies. It will include everything that promotes the well-being of the villagers. It

will not exclude the industries mentioned by my correspondent so long as they do not smother the villages and village life. I do visualize electricity, ship-building, iron-works, machine-making and the like existing side by side with village handicrafts. But the order of dependence will be reversed. Hitherto the industrialization has been so planned as to destroy the villages and village-crafts. In the State of the future, it will subserve the villages and their crafts.

—*Harijan*: Jan. 27, 1940.

52. VILLAGE ECONOMICS

NOW I have no historical proof, but I believe that there was a time in India when village economics were organized on the basis of non-violent occupations, not on the basis of the rights of man but on the duties of man. Those who engaged themselves in such occupations did earn their living, but their labour contributed to the good of the community. A carpenter, for instance, ministered to the needs of the village farmer. He got no cash payment, but was paid in kind by the villagers. There could be injustice even in this system, but it would be reduced to a minimum. I speak from personal knowledge of the life in Kathiawad of over sixty years ago. There was more lustre in people's eyes, and more life in their limbs, than you find to-day. It was a life founded on unconscious *Ahimsa*.

Body Labour

Body labour was at the core of these occupations and industries, and there was no large scale machinery. For,

when a man is content to own only so much land as he can till with his own labour, he cannot exploit others. Handicrafts exclude exploitation and slavery. Large-scale machinery concentrates wealth in the hands of one man who lords it over the rest who slave for him. For, he may be trying to create ideal conditions for his workmen, but it is none the less exploitation which is a form of violence.

When I say that there was a time when society was based not on exploitation but on justice, I mean to suggest that Truth and *Ahimsa* were not virtues confined to individuals, but were practised by communities. To me virtue ceases to have any value, if it is cloistered or possible only for individuals.

—*Harijan*: Sept. 1, 1940.

53. AN AMERICAN'S QUESTIONS

AN AMERICAN: Why not have Indian people use Indian handspun cloth and keep her mills busy for the export of manufactured cloth and yarn? Don't you think that this would help the cotton-grower?

Gandhiji: I would not mind such a thing, but it must be in order to supply the felt needs of the country which received our cloth. I have no idea of exploiting other countries for the benefit of India. We are suffering from the poisonous disease of exploitation ourselves, and I would not like my country to be guilty of any such thing. If Japan, say, as a free country wanted India's help, and said we could produce certain goods cheaper, and we might export them to Japan, we would gladly do

so. But under my scheme of things all dumping of goods by one country in another, supported by her army and her navy, has to cease.

India and America

An American: Apart from export of merchandise, what has India to give America, and, in turn, what does India expect from America?

Gandhiji: I must correct your question for you. India sends no merchandise to America, she sends only raw material, and that is a matter for serious consideration for every nationalist. For, we cannot suffer our country remaining an exporter of raw produce, for it means (as it has meant) extinction of handicrafts and art itself. I would expect America to treat India not as though India was a country for American exploitation, but as if India was a free country, although unarmed, and deserving, therefore, the same treatment that America would wish at the hands of India.

Message of Jesus

An American: You are repeating, Sir, the message of Jesus.

Gandhiji: I agree. We are poor in technical skill, but as soon as you accept and consent to follow Jesus' teaching, I would not have to complain of all the skill being monopolized by America. You will then say: 'Here is a sister country poor in technical skill, let us offer our skilled assistance not for exploitation, not for a terrific price, but for its benefit, and so for nothing.' And here,

let me say a word about your missionaries. You send them here for nothing, but that also is part of imperialist exploitation. For, they would like to make us like you, better buyers of your goods, and unable to do without your cars and luxuries. So, the Christianity that you send us is adulterated. If you established your schools, colleges and hospitals without the object of adding to the number of the so-called Christian population, your philanthropy would be untainted.

Technical Skill

As regards technical skill, I cannot afford to do what the Tatas are doing. They can afford to bring an American expert manager at Rs. 20,000 a month. But whilst they represent the spirit of adventure, they do not represent poor India. India has seven lakhs of villages which take in 90 per cent of her population. America has to think of these. America ought, if she will be of real help, to exercise her resourcefulness in this direction. And, for that purpose, America will have to cease to be the premier exporting country that she is. My views on national planning differ from the prevailing ones. I do not want it along industrial lines. I want to prevent our villages from catching the infection of industrialisation. American exploitation has added neither to the moral height of the exploited countries, nor of the exploiting country. On the contrary, it has impeded their march towards spiritual progress, and deadened America's real spirit of philanthropy. A phenomenon like the one that America witnessed cannot happen in India. I mean the

destruction of tons of sugar and other agricultural products. You might have supplied other countries the sugar and the wheat or fed America's own unemployed.

An American: But you could not have taken our pigs!

Gandhiji: I know. But all do not think like me. Pandit Nehru wants industrialization because he thinks that, if it is socialized, it would be free from the evils of capitalism. My own view is that the evils are inherent in industrialism, and no amount of socialization can eradicate them.*

—*Harijan*: Sept. 29, 1940.

54. AN IDEAL SOCIETY

AN ideal society is that in which every individual will be able to live a life of progressively increasing wants with a minimum output of labour. Thus writes a friend from Ahmedabad. The proposition is pleasing and is backed by plausible argument which many may accept.

That everyone in this world should be able to maintain as high a standard of life as possible with the least possible output of labour, is just as fantastic as to expect a camel to pass through the eye of a needle. The writer's high living would appear to mean luxurious living, which is an impossible proposition for any society as a whole. And when there is no limit to luxury where shall we stop? All

* "In the modern craze for wholesale industrialization, my presentation has been questioned, if not brushed aside. It has been contended that the growing poverty of the masses, due to the progress of industrialization, is inevitable, and should, therefore, be suffered. I do not consider the evil to be inevitable, let alone to be suffered."

—*Harijan*: Oct. 23, 1937.

the scriptures of the world have taught the exact opposite. Plain living and high thinking is the ideal that has been placed before us. The vast majority recognize its truth, but are unable to get there because of human frailty. It is, however, perfectly possible to envisage such an existence. That the crores in India should be guaranteed a certain income is only right, and to achieve this ideal large-scale machinery is not only not necessary but wholly destructive.

Happiness Lies in Contentment

Man falls from the pursuit of the ideal of plain living and high thinking the moment he wants to multiply his daily wants. History gives ample proof of this. Man's happiness really lies in contentment. He who is discontented, however much he possesses, becomes a slave to his desires. And there is really no slavery equal to that of his desires. All the sages have declared from the house-tops that man can be his own worst enemy as well as his best friend. To be free or to be a slave lies in his own hands. And what is true for the individual is true for society.

—*Harijan*: Feb. 1, 1942.

55. TWO SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT

THERE are two schools of thought current in the world. One wants to divide the world into cities and the other into villages. The village civilization and the city civilization are totally different things. One depends on machinery and industrialization, and the other on handicrafts. We have given preference to the latter.

After all, this industrialization and large-scale production are only of comparatively recent growth. We don't know how far it has contributed to the development of our happiness, but we know this much that it has brought in its wake the recent world wars. This Second World War is not still over, and even if it comes to an end, we are hearing of a Third World War. Our country was never so unhappy and miserable as it is at present. City people may be getting big profits and good wages, but all that has become possible by sucking the blood of villages.

We Must be True to Ourselves

We don't want to collect lakhs and crores. We don't always want to depend on money for our work. If we are prepared to sacrifice our lives for the cause, money is nothing. We must have faith and we must be true to ourselves. If we have these, we shall be able by decentralizing our capital of Rs. 30 lakhs in villages to create national wealth amounting to Rs. 300 crores. To do that main thing, what is necessary is to make the villages self-sufficient and self-reliant. But mind you, my idea of self-sufficiency is not a narrow one. There is no scope for selfishness and arrogance in my self-sufficiency.

No Isolation

I am not preaching isolation. We have to be humble as the dust for the fulfilment of our cause. We have to mix with people even as sugar mixes itself with milk.

Though villagers will be self-sufficient so far as it is possible, they will devote their time also to their intellectual development for creation of consciousness for the contemplated non-violent society of the future.

—*Hindustan Standard*: Dec. 6, 1944.

56. OUR HELPLESSNESS

I REGARD the existence of power wheels for the grinding of corn in thousands of villages as the limit of our helplessness. I suppose India does not produce all the engines or grinding machines. I fondly hope that the correspondent is incorrect and the number of wheels and engines does not run into thousands even for the whole of India. But if true, it is indicative of the utter laziness into which our people have fallen. The planting of such machinery and engines on a large scale in village is also a sign of greed. Is it proper to fill one's pockets in this manner at the expense of the poor? Every such machinery puts thousands of hand *chakkies* out of work and takes away employment from thousands of housewives and artisans who make these *chakkies*.

—*Harijan*: March 10, 1946.

No Room for Machines

There is no room for machines that would displace human labour and that would concentrate power in a few hands. Labour has its unique place in a cultured human family. Every machine that helps every individual has a place. But I must confess that I have never sat down to think out what that machine can be. I

have thought of Singer's Sewing Machine. But even that is perfunctory. I do not need it to fill in my picture.

—*Harijan*: July 28, 1946.

57. THE MACHINE AGE

OURS has been described as the Machine Age, because the machine dominates our economy. 'Now, what is a machine?'—one may ask. In a sense, man is the most wonderful machine in creation. It can neither be duplicated, nor copied. I have, however, used the word not in its wider sense but in the sense of an appliance that tended to displace human or animal labour instead of supplementing it or merely increasing its efficiency. This is the first differential characteristic of the machine. The second characteristic is that there is no limit to its growth or evolution. That cannot be said of human labour. There is a limit beyond which its capacity or mechanical efficiency cannot go.

Out of this circumstance arises the third characteristic of the machine. It seems to be possessed of a will or genius of its own. It is antagonistic to man's labour. Thus it tends more to displace man—one machine doing the work of a hundred, if not a thousand, who go to swell the army of the unemployed and the under-employed, not because it is desirable but because that is its law.

In America it has, perhaps, reached the extreme limit. I have been opposed to it, not from to-day, but even before 1908 when I was in South Africa surrounded by machines. Their onward march had not only not

impressed me, but had repelled me. It then dawned on me that to suppress and exploit the millions, the machine was the device *par excellence*, it had no place in man's economy if, as social units, all men were to be equal.

My Belief

It is my belief that the machine has not added to man's stature, and it won't serve the world but disrupt it, unless it is put in its proper place. Then, I read Ruskin's '*Unto This Last*' during a train journey to Durban and it gripped me immediately. I saw clearly that if mankind was to progress and to realize the ideal of equality and brotherhood, it must adopt and act on the principle of '*Unto This Last*'; it must take along with it even the dumb, the halt and the lame. Did not Yudhishtira—the Prince of Righteousness—refuse to enter Heaven without his faithful dog?

In the Machine Age, these have no place. Under it, the fittest alone survive to the exclusion and at the cost of the weak. That is not my picture of Independence in which there is room even for the weakest. That requires that we must utilize all available human labour before we entertain the idea of employing mechanical power.

—*Harijan*: Aug. 25, 1946.

58. ALTERNATIVE TO INDUSTRIALISM

I DO not believe that industrialization is necessary in any case for any country. It is much less so for India. Indeed, I believe that Independent India can only dis-

charge her duty towards a groaning world by adopting a simple but ennobled life, by developing her thousands of cottages and living at peace with the world. High thinking is inconsistent with complicated material life based on high speed imposed on us by Mammon worship. All the graces of life are possible only when we learn the art of living nobly.

Plain Living

There may be sensation in living dangerously. We must draw the distinction between living in the face of danger and living dangerously. A man who dares to live alone in a forest infested by wild beasts and wilder men without a gun and with God as his only Help, lives in the face of danger. A man who lives perpetually in mid-air and dives to the earth below to the admiration of a gaping world lives dangerously. One is a purposeful, the other a purposeless life.

Whether such plain living is possible for an isolated nation, however large geographically and numerically, in the face of a world armed to the teeth and in the midst of pomp and circumstance, is a question open to the doubt of a sceptic. The answer is straight and simple. If plain life is worth living, then the attempt is worth making even if only an individual or a group makes the effort.

Key Industries

At the same time, I believe that some key industries are necessary. I do not believe in arm-chair or armed

socialism. I believe in action according to my belief, without waiting for wholesale conversion. Hence without having to enumerate key industries, I would have State ownership where a large number of people have to work together. The ownership of the products of their labour, whether skilled or unskilled, will vest in them through the State. But as I can conceive such a State only based on non-violence, I would not dispossess monied men by force but would invite their co-operation in the process of conversion to State ownership. There are no pariahs of society, whether they are millionaires or paupers. The two are sores of the same disease. And all are men "for a' that".

—*Harijan*: Sept. 1, 1946.

Onslaught of Machinery

To-day there is such an onslaught on India of Western machinery that for India to withstand it successfully would be nothing short of a miracle. I must confess that to-day everything seems to point to the contrary.

—*Harijan*: Nov. 17, 1946.

59. THE PRINCIPLE OF PLANNING

Q. THE Government has been introducing schemes of industrializing the country for maximum utilization of her raw materials, not of her abundant and unused man-power which is left to take care of itself as best it can. Can such schemes be considered *Swadeshi*?

A. The question has been well put. I do not exactly know what the Government plan is. But I heartily en-

dorse the proposition that any plan which exploits the raw materials of a country and neglects the potentially more powerful man-power, is lop-sided and can never tend to establish human equality.

America is the most industrialized country in the world, and yet it has not banished poverty and degradation. That is because it neglects the universal man-power and concentrates power in the hands of the few who amass fortunes at the expense of the many. The result is that its industrialization has become a menace to its own poor and to the rest of the world.

If India is to escape such disaster, it has to imitate what is best in America and the other Western countries and leave aside its attractive-looking but destructive economic policies. Therefore, real planning consists in the best utilization of the whole man-power of India and the distribution of the raw products of India in her numerous villages, instead of sending them outside and rebuying finished articles at fabulous prices.

—*Harijan*: March 23, 1947.

60. SUPREMACY OF MAN OVER MACHINE

I HAVE no doubt that spinning and weaving of *Khadi* are more important than ever, if we are to have freedom that is to be instinctively felt by the masses of the villagers of India. That is the Kingdom of God on earth. Through *Khadi*, we were struggling to establish the supremacy of man in the place of the suppre-

SUPREMACY OF MAN OVER MACHINE

macy of power-driven machine over him. Through *Khadi* we were striving for equality of all men and women in the place of the gross inequality to be witnessed to-day. We were striving to attain subservience of capital under labour in the place of the insolent triumph of capital over labour. Unless, therefore, all the effort made during the past thirty years in India was a retrograde step, hand-spinning and all it implies must be prosecuted with much greater vigour and far greater intelligence than hitherto.

—*Harijan*: Dec. 21, 1947.

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